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Retrospect and Prospect.

SERMONS

PREACHED FOR THE MOST PART IN

St. Thomas' Cathedral,

BOMBAY,

Between the years 1888 *and* 1893,

BY

LOUIS GEORGE MYLNE, M.A., D.D.,

Fourth Bishop of Bombay.

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DEDICATED

TO THE WORSHIPPERS

IN

ST. THOMAS' CATHEDRAL, BOMBAY.

L. G. B.

PREFACE.

THIS little book takes its title, contrary to custom, from the last, instead of from the first, sermon contained in it.

The sermons were put together, and partly printed, before the one entitled *Retrospect and Prospect* was preached, in its present form at any rate. But as that one strikes the keynote of the whole, it was chosen to give its title to the volume. If my thoughts have any value for the reader, it is as those of a man in middle life, looking back to his own early mistakes, and trying to be only humbled, not discouraged by them; looking forward to such work as may lie before him, and trying to face it in a Strength not his own.

Thus they come before those who may care to study them; in the hope that perhaps some may gain new courage from them, to forget those things which are behind, and to reach forth to those things which are before—pressing towards the mark.

Ahmednagar Districts,
December 1st, 1892.

SERMONS.

THE QUEEN'S JUBILEE.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above.—*S. James* i. 17.

As a part of our common rejoicings in the Jubilee which we are to observe upon Wednesday, you are invited to meet in this Church that we may offer our thanksgivings to God for all that He has done for the British Empire through the honoured instrumentality of the Queen-Empress. There will be no room in the full programme of that day for any words to be spoken from the pulpit, and therefore I am going to speak now about the spirit in which we ought to address ourselves to a public acknowledgment of God's goodness. I wish to help you to make the service on Wednesday strike the key-note of the observance of the whole day.

The characteristic which will distinguish that service from any others which we are accustomed to offer, will be that we shall meet specially

Bombay Cathedral, February 8, 1887.

to thank God for what He is doing for His children in this world, through the agency of one of themselves. We are well used to giving thanks in the Church for all that has been effected for humanity through the agency of the great ones of old. We bless Him as each Saint's Day comes round, for the work of His servants who have been called hence to take their place in the Church Expectant in Paradise. What will make Wednesday unique in our experience is that she, for whose work in the world we are about to offer up our thanksgivings, still lives in the Church Militant upon earth. For it is nothing, as I understand it, less than this, which underlies our rejoicings at the present time, and more especially our thanksgiving in Church. We are not merely going to offer our congratulations to the Lady whose fiftieth year of sovereignty is so rapidly drawing to its close. We are not only going to pray to Almighty God that her reign may be prolonged with all honour. Both these we shall do, and do heartily. But the loyalty and the sympathy with which we do them are the outcome of our deep-rooted conviction that by what she has been,

and what she is, the moral wealth of the world has been augmented. To acknowledge this, and to acknowledge that it is God's gift, we are to meet in His house upon Wednesday.

Nor do we lack precedent for so doing. On the walls of the oldest churches in Christendom, there stand pourtrayed in imperishable mosaic the effigies of worthies of the Church, by whose lives the Christianity of the world was felt to have been ennobled and enriched. In the centre just over the altar, the Saviour in His Majesty is delineated. On either hand are His Apostles and Prophets, the martyrs who loved Him to the death, the confessors who suffered for His sake. And among these, each delineated in glory with the halo of sanctity round their heads, there stand some figures which arrest our attention as being differently ornamented from the rest.

Who are those, we ask, who have not round their heads the same mystical *nimbus* with the rest? And we are told that they are portraits of living worthies, whose virtues still adorned the Church on earth at the time when their effigies were placed there.

Some thirteen or fourteen centuries may have elapsed since the day when the strange, stiff mosaic glittered fresh from the hand of the artist, and still we have the testimony before our eyes that the Church was not too timid or too grudging thus publicly to thank God for living greatness.

In the spirit, as I trust, of these acknowledgments, I would put before you what I believe to be the great causes why we and all subjects of the Crown should offer up our thanksgivings to God for one who still lives among ourselves.

It is the boast of the British nation of to-day that, all hideous exceptions notwithstanding, that sanctity of family life which forms the back-bone of national greatness has never been more nearly universal than it is in the society that we know best.

There is a kindling of honest pride in our eyes when we think of what we have learnt to associate with the thought of English womanhood. Then, nobility in the women of a country makes chivalry come naturally to its men. Men bred with a reverence for womanhood can never quite lose their belief in it, can never be quite

without the self-respect which is the outcome of homage to goodness.

It must be left to our children, perhaps, to form an estimate of the various forces which have conspired to bring about what we so rejoice in. But of this at least we may all of us rest assured, that among the forces of which they will take account when they ask why the ideal of womanhood rose so high in the England of the Nineteenth Century, they will reckon as not the least potent the influence of one wife and mother, and she the highest in the land. All the chivalry of all our young men, all the sanctity of all our happy homes, all that which has become synonymous to so many of us with the words, "an English lady," owes something to the Court of Queen Victoria, from which everything has been fain to slink abashed which was alien from herself and from goodness.

It comes of the reverence in which we hold her as head of the women of England, that we have been able to look to our Sovereign for the fulfilment of that which was asked of her as the monarch of a constitutional country. The great function of the Throne in the present day

is to furnish to our popular institutions that element of personal reverence without which the most perfect of governments must fail in the appeal which it ought to make to some of the best sides of human nature. We desire that the public order of our country should be founded on something more than the bare reasonableness with which it appeals for our support. We would add the passion of a personal devotion to our sober, well-reasoned belief in the goodness of our national institutions. As units in a common-wealth of citizens, we ask for something to elicit our sympathies, for something to stimulate our imaginations, in our relations to the government of our country. The day has long gone by when it was possible for the Sovereign of England to enact a showy part on the world's stage. And it were difficult to exaggerate the demand which is made on the qualities of the heart by a call to play a part before the world which requires that the enthusiasm of a nation should be maintained by the personality of the Sovereign, while yet all personal ambitions must be ignored throughout her reign. She must be one whom we can invest

with all the halo which surrounds a paramount position: yet she must be one whom no advantages of that position can betray into forgetting its limitations. She lives surrounded with all the pomp and circumstance which environed crowned heads in the past; yet she must exercise that effacement of self which is the most difficult of virtues to a Sovereign. She is condemned to a life of splendid solitude, unsolaced by the companionship of equals: yet her function in the national life is to furnish the bond of sympathy between the people and the Constitution under which they live. The self-control which recognises the constitution under all the outward forms of the Monarchy, the sympathy which can reach all alike through the "divinity" which "hedges" a Monarch—to act out both of these at the same time is a triumph of character indeed.

Nothing were easier in the England of to-day than for the Sovereign to live a life of mere selfishness; to accept all the deference and all the state which are the natural appanage of a Crown, and to hold that the limitations of the Constitution had absolved her from the fulfilment of any function which was not purely formal

and ceremonial. And nothing, on the other hand, were more tempting to a Sovereign of capacity and tact than to use the opportunities of the situation for bringing personal influences to bear far beyond the sphere which still remains to the legitimate weight of the Crown in the counsels of our national life.

A Sovereign who has reigned for many years is of necessity the most experienced politician to be found in the country which she rules. And there are many other motives than ambition, many thoughts quite untainted by selfishness, which might suggest to the experience of one thus qualified, that departures from a constitutional attitude might be anything but a disservice to the people.

And again, that very function of the Crown about which I spoke just now, as introducing a personal element into what otherwise were but the machinery of the constitution, might prove either most beneficial or most disastrous, according as it was used from time to time. It must carry possibilities with it which would paralyse the straightforwardness of any minister. Instead of being, as we are thankful that it is, the

most characteristically English of our institutions, it might be employed to introduce into public life what we stigmatize by the exact opposite of that adjective. Nor is it possible to exaggerate, as I think, the self-control, the unvarying conscientiousness, the power of self-effacement for the sake of duty which have been exercised to keep a reign of fifty years unflecked by a stain of that selfishness which would suggest a wrong use of such an influence.

It were thus possible for the influence of the Crown to be a perpetual disturbing force in the exercise of Parliamentary Government. When we look at it on the positive side, what has been that influence as we have known it? The infusion of a genuine human tenderness into the relations of rulers and ruled, the visible embodiment before our eyes of the Majesty of truly national life, the acceptance of the nation, not the dynasty, as the paramount factor in British politics, the untroubled fountain of authority amid the jar of party conflict.

Yet never, save where womanly sorrow has disarmed all decent criticism, has the self-

effacement of the Sovereign of England meant regardlessness of the claims upon her Person.

She has been to us the personal embodiment of the care of the nation as a whole for each family and individual among its millions. It is the voice of the hearts which she has appealed to which proclaims the best Jubilee of her reign.

The desolated hearths around a colliery on the morrow of some terrible disaster, the wounded in the hospitals of an army, the starving, when war in America had paralysed a great industry in England, may be surrounded with all that is most perfect in the machinery of constitutional government: yet a word of true womanly fellow-feeling, when the speaker is the highest in the land, is what lends voice to the sympathy of the nation, without it but imperfectly articulate.

In India, most of all, should we be thankful that this is the light in which we know her in a country where the personal and the official are least separable in the minds of the people; where kindness goes farthest with the masses; where the action of a constitutional principle, apart from the

personality of the Ruler, is a thought to which none can yet rise except only the more educated few.

It is with these considerations in your minds that I appeal to you, fellow-subjects and fellow-Christians, to unite in the religious observance of this our great national rejoicing.

When we enter these walls upon Wednesday, let us turn from the person of the Queen, to Him Who has enabled her to be to us what I have tried to remind you that she is, to the Pattern and the Source of human goodness, to the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Let our service be something more than a mere episode in a day of many observances; let it be no formal recognition of a higher Power, lending the sanction of a traditional system to the realities which will occupy us elsewhere, but the fervid acknowledgment of our hearts that we recognise the grace of the Giver in the use which has been made of His gifts.

For, believe me, my friends, human goodness is then most truly honoured when we associate it with something higher than itself. The goodness which for nigh fifty years has borne

the test of Royal publicity, no less than the humblest of the virtues which flourish in the homes of the poor, has that in it which is not of this world, and of which we simply miss the deepest meaning if we fail to ascribe it to God's grace. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" is God's question to the Monarch on the Throne, as it is to the most obscure among ourselves. And in the answer that all comes from Him is to be found the chief claim to our affection which can be established by the possessor of the greatest gifts. For it is when they are acknowledged to be His that they are most certain to be used to His Glory, and it is when we recognise them as such that we most readily acknowledge their greatness.

For my own part, when I think of the Royal Lady whose golden wedding to the nation of England we are keeping in our rejoicings this week, I love most to be able to say of her, that having inherited the greatest of opportunities, she has used them to the glory of the Giver.

CHRIST, THE ULTIMATE TEACHER.

"Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him:—Art Thou he that should come, or do we look for another?"—St. Matt. xi. 2, 3.

THE question came to our Lord as a sigh out of the profound weariness of a dungeon. Some have thought that the depth of that weariness had caused even the Baptist to waver, and that he asked the question for the confirmation of his own faith. To others, again, it has appeared that he had but sent his doubting disciples that they might become convinced about our Lord. For myself, I have always believed that he was sighing for a word of confirmation for a faith sorely tried but not shaken.

Without going into the question at any length, I would remind you of the exquisite delicacy of the reply which was sent him by our Lord. He

Bombay Cathedral, 3rd Sunday in Advent, 1885.

will not wound either the Baptist or his disciples by admitting that the faith of either could be staggering. He assumes that the signs of His Messiahship will put its truth beyond the reach of a doubt: and so He answers by exhibiting to the messengers a few of His works of healing power. And this done, He sends them back to their master, and bids them recount what they have seen, and assure the sad prisoner of the blessedness which belongs to unquestioning faith :—"Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me."

This assumed that to one lying in a dungeon, cut off from the sight of the miracles by which the Messiahship was being established, in the morbid darkness of isolation, and the terrible reaction of inactivity, the mere narrative of what was going forward would be sufficient to clear away the clouds, and render faith as triumphant as ever.

The morbidness of inactivity has its trials: pre-occupation and press of business have theirs. It is to those who have little time for such subjects, who are hurried to half-realised conclusions about questions which deserve our best attention; to those who are in danger of waking up and finding that they have been led to the wrong answer before they realised that the question had been raised—it is to such that I would address myself this evening, about the answer which we are called upon to give to the age-long, obstinate question of the claims of Jesus Christ on our allegiance. Is He the one Teacher for all ages and for all the various races of mankind, or are we and all men in every century still called upon to look for other teachers to carry farther what he has left half done?

Let me expand the question a little farther. It has been given to many great teachers to carry the spiritual progress of the race to a point which had been unattainable before them. A Moses, a Buddha, a Socrates have each in their own country and their own time established a claim on the veneration of the world as among its great moral benefactors. Yet we claim as we

think of any one of them, that the world which has owed them so much has a right to pass beyond their limitations. We treat each of them as having a claim upon our gratitude, when we find how the life of their teaching is still pulsating in the veins of the human race. But just because it has been so perfectly assimilated, we have a right to supersede it with something fresh, to work it into ever-new forms, which its originators might fail to recognise. And if we believe in the generosity of these great teachers, we must hold that such progress to things higher is just what they would have wished that we should effect. Surely each of them, were he cognisant at this moment of the affairs of the humanity which he has enriched, would ask rather what progress we had made, than what reverence we had retained for his own person. He would not, if he could, have us stand still at the point where he was compelled to leave off. But as he was forced on by his own genius to begin with the best thoughts of his predecessors, and to treat them as the starting point of his own, he would desire that his successors, in like manner, should begin where he had left off.

He would regard himself as then most honoured, when he was treated as forming but a link in a chain of never-ending progress. In proportion to his disinterestedness and his greatness, each "master of those who know" would be eager to proclaim to his followers that they must ever be "looking for another."

Shall we be right in treating Jesus of Nazareth as these other great teachers should be treated? Are His maxims, nay, is His Personality the best which one period of human history was spiritually capable of producing, but confined by intellectual limitations which it was impossible at that day to transcend? Must we, with all our centuries of vantage, expect to supersede them in their turn? Shall we do honour to the Prophet of Galilee by saying that He would not desire, if He were cognisant of our needs at this moment, to impose on all future generations the limits of His own age and of His own character, and to confine mankind to all time, within the bounds of His own mental horizon? Or is He a teacher for all time, in such a sense that it must ever be impossible to pass the limits of what He has laid down? Are His words no tide-marks of

progress, which in time must be overtaken and left behind? Is it treason to His unique Personality to treat the lightest utterance of His lips as other than absolute truth?

As I propound these grave questions for your consideration, it is possible that some of you, my brethren, may enquire whether it is necessary to ask them; whether it is wise to confront doubts upon a subject, where it is easier, perhaps, to raise than to lay them. Would to God I could reply in the negative, or rather could take the negative for granted, and so escape propounding them altogether. There is one, and but one frame of mind in which it is safe to pass such questions wholly by, the adoring, yet intelligent submission of those who, having cast their all upon the Saviour, are in a position to say for themselves that He has so satisfied the needs of their being, Has so filled every blank in their life, so answered all the questionings of their spirit, so stilled all the restlessness of their heart, that if the whole world were to go off after other teachers, He must still reign supreme over their hearts. To them these questions are unnecessary, because they have already found the answer;

because Jesus has so met their moral needs that there is no longer any question for their understanding as to the claims which he possesses upon their allegiance. If all were in a state such as this, it would indeed be unnecessary to raise them. Where the heart has given fair play to Jesus Christ, he is enthroned as Supreme Lord of the understanding.

It is on those who are in a very different position that I urge the paramount importance of doing justice to the questions which I have raised, and which, if not solved in one sense, are pretty certain to solve themselves in another. To ask no questions once meant to believe—as far as mere acquiescence can mean faith. I greatly fear that to ask no questions at the present day, means more frequently to acquiesce in this position—that what every one does not believe in, what such and such clever men have rejected is nothing of such absolute importance that it greatly matters whether I accept it or reject it.

The first condition, then, of reaching a right answer is seriousness in propounding the question. A preacher has still to say at the present day, to many who ought to face these great questions:—

"Set your *heart* unto all the words which I testify unto you this day. For it is no vain thing for you; because it is your life." Moral carelessness must be equally out of place, wherever the truth is to be found. Were christianity a vast system of superstition, still life would require seriousness in those who lived it, if they were ever to make the most of it while it lasted. While if this life has to be lived for that which follows, we dare not "go to war with a light heart," as we attack its most intricate problems. Do not leave it, then, to be the sport of mere circumstances, whether you are found in the great issues of life to be on the side of Jesus Christ or of his opponents. Do not settle the most important of questions without realising that it ever has been raised.

I speak thus, because half the negations which are so thoughtlessly accepted in the present day, are the result, in the first instance, I am persuaded, of mere carelessness and pre-occupation. Mental habits are unconsciously formed which are incompatible with belief in christianity, and then there is no revising the conclusions which are not so much conscious convictions as part of a whole habit of thought.

Let me indicate, then, two moral tendencies which land men unconsciously in infidelity.

The first is the exaggerated importance which an age of great material progress attaches to the physical conditions under which our life is lived.

The second is forgetfulness of the divine standard by which all actions must ultimately be estimated.

Each of these is fundamentally incompatible with the assumptions on which Christ's teaching is based. Each leads by a lowering of our moral standard, to the blurring of our intellectual conception of the life and the life-work of the Messiah.

First, then, of the exaggerated importance which an age of great outward prosperity attaches to the material side of life.

It is a fundamental assumption of Christ's teaching that man as a spiritual being is more important in the eyes of his Creator than the greatest of mere material existences; that one soul which is capable of conscious union with the purposes of him who created is, is more precious than Sirius or Aldeboran, or the whole mighty system of the heavens.

It was easy to believe that this was so, when men saw in the stars which surrounded them mere appendages to the world on which they lived. Is it equally easy at the present day? When we know that the life of our race is a mere moment in the history of our own planet, and that that planet is only a minor member in a system perhaps the least in the heavens, we begin to ask whether the welfare of such a being can possibly have so concerned the Creator, as that He Himself should have stooped from His throne to effect the redemption of our race. And yet to believe that this was so is the first condition of thinking of Jesus Christ as the ultimate Teacher of truth to mankind in all ages and all countries.

An effort of faith such as this requires that some moral training shall have led up to it. The habit of mind must have been formed which treats the material conditions of our life as subordinate in all things to the spiritual. Live for that in yourself which is unseen, yet which you know to be the part of your being to which the needs of the material are subordinate; and then, when you have to face the mighty problem,

how man, the speck upon this planet, is more important in the eyes of his Creator than the sun round which that planet revolves, you will have the answer ready-made to your hand—that "the things which are unseen are eternal," and therefore are of paramount importance; while "the things that are seen are temporal," the vastest of them as well as the least.

Another assumption which underlies Christ's whole teaching is that the good or bad consequences of actions are the consequence, not the criterion, of their essential moral complexion. Wrong-doing was wrong in His eyes, not *because* it entailed misery and degradation, but because it was contrary to God's laws. The misery and the degradation He regarded as the natural, material accompaniment of the outrage on the sanctity of the Creator. He never could have admitted that their consequences were what *determined* the moral character of actions, apart from their relation to a system distinct from what obtains in this world.

Diametrically opposed to this conception is that of the utilitarianism of to-day. In the thought which is most popular among us, the

ultimate criterion of all action, that which makes it right or wrong, is nothing else than the consequences which it produces to the agent and to those who are affected by him.

The very distinction of right from wrong is treated, according to this system, as but the outcome of ineradicable association with the pain and pleasure which our actions produce.

Here, again, the decision of the reason for, or against the teaching of Jesus Christ, will certainly be determined for most of us very largely by moral associations. It is never easy to refer for our standards to a world which is imperceptible to our senses. We, few of us, have time or inclination to go deeply into the intellectual assumptions which lie at the root of human life, and it is never easy to be constantly referring to a world which lies beyond our present ken. If we are in the habit of trying our daily actions by referring them to the standard of God's will, not by asking how far they serve our turn in promoting our enjoyment of life, then if ever the question is forced upon us:—Can we hold by the teaching of Jesus Christ, who judged of the character of actions by referring them to the will

of His Father, and who treated the consequences of those actions as the result of their bearing on that will, we, at least, have the moral foundation of faithfulness to Him as a teacher.

I have touched on the merest fragment of a great subject. If it help us to treat Jesus Christ as the teacher of teachers for ourselves, as a fragment it will not have been wasted.

Let me close with a quotation from a writer who has entered, perhaps, more deeply than any other into the reception of the teaching of the One Master:—"Blessed is the soul which heareth the Lord speaking within her, and receiveth from His mouth the word of consolation. Blessed are the ears that gladly receive the pulses of the divine whisper, and give no heed to the many whisperings of the world. Consider these things, O my soul, and shut up the door of thy sensual desires, that thou mayest hear what the Lord thy God will speak in thee."

Let this, my friends, be the attitude of our souls, and there is no doubt how we shall answer the great question, whether Jesus be the ultimate teacher or whether any other can supersede Him.

WHAT REGENERATE CHILDHOOD HAS TO TEACH US.

"For unto us a Child is Born."—*Isaiah* ix. 6.

I suppose that the domesticity of Christmas, the familiarity of the scene that it brings before us, is what has made it so entirely as it is, the favourite Festival in the Christian Calendar.

Taken apart from its deeper significance, its commonplace, everyday aspect appeals to us like that of no other. The Idyll of the birth of the Saviour, like the Tragedy of the close of His life, appeals so straight to our elemental human sympathies, that Christmas Day and Good Friday stand out, and must ever stand out, in a more vivid reality and intensity than even Easter, with the triumph of His Rising.

It is of the directness of this appeal to our best selves that I desire to take advantage this morning. I would connect what is highest and holiest in the coming of our Saviour to this world, with what comes home so straight to each

Bombay Cathedral, Christmas, 1890.

one of us in the thought of what we owe, or may owe, to the child-element in our individual surroundings, or at any rate in our personal history.

Let me speak first of the sanctification which has been lent to the domestic affections by this entrance of God Himself into the sphere of family life.

I scarce know whether to speak, in this context, of the consecration of domestic affection, or, as it were, of the domestication of what is sacred, which have accrued to our everyday life by the birth of the Saviour among men. To have had the details of our homes and our nurseries raised up into full touch with the Divine; or to have had the Divine Nature itself brought down till it touches our nurseries—which of these shall I take to put before you as the lesson of the manger of Bethlehem? Let me begin, at any rate, with the second; the other will follow readily upon it.

That we should associate the helplessness of infancy with the might of the Creator of all things, and that this should be no figure of speech, but a fact in the history of our race—dwell on this

for a minute, to begin with. God would bring us into communing with Himself, would raise humanity into fellowship with divinity, and what means does He adopt for the purpose? "Herein is Love"—this is His message—"not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave His Son, a propitiation for our sins"—a propitiation, an offering, and how an offering? "By the mystery of Thy Holy Incarnation," that is to say, by Thy Holy Nativity, by Thy tender, clinging, wailing, loving helplessness, "Good LORD, deliver us." Yes, by this, and by nothing less than this, that Thou Thyself, Eternal Wisdom, Eternal Word, Thyself, Very GOD, Only-Begotten, didst lie, swaddled, speechless, needing all things, a Baby on a lowly Mother's breast. And by this dost Thou appeal to each heart that can enter with but ordinary human-heartedness into that which every cradle brings before us. What we have been, that didst Thou become. What our children are, in that we read of Thee. To this didst Thou descend for love of us—that if we could not apprehend Thee upon Thy Throne, at least in Thy manger-cradle we might embrace Thee; that if we, GOD help us, could not credit that

Thy Love could condescend to our needs, at least we might learn what Thou art to us when Thy creatures had to condescend to Thee.

But this stooping of Godhead to the manger carried with it a corresponding exaltation to be conferred on the child-nature which He assumed. Thenceforward, in regenerated children there is not innocency only to be respected; there is the presence of Divine Nature to be revered. What we delight to see in our little ones, after they have been dedicated to God at the font, is a heaven-born capability of goodness; not merely an enabling capacity, but a new self, the participation of a new nature.

We grow up, each of us, with this new self within us, with something far other than human nature, at work to assert and to develop itself, if we give it but the barest fair play. Who, I wonder, has not known from time to time, at moments of unsuccessful endeavour, the feeling, what I want is not improvement, not some bettering of what I find in myself, not simply some assistance, some suggestion, not even some deepening of my resolvedness: what I want is nothing less than a new self, a new relation to

myself and my surroundings, fresh powers to put in practice what I know, a fresh capacity for realising, for making actual, what I believe in as capabilities of human nature.

The craving is nothing illusory: that new self is actually within our reach: we have once been in perfect possession of it: it awaits but compliance with its conditions, to be renewed; not, alas! in its old freshness, but as forfeited rights can be renewed, as a lapsed inheritance can be revived, as capacities impaired by want of exercise can be restored by treatment and by exertion.

But in children we see in its integrity what so often to ourselves, in later life, can be at best but a half-fulfilled aspiration.

And, first, to see the gift in its fresh completeness is the greatest of help to ourselves, as we with jaded powers and dulled efforts, aspire to make the new self our own, in the sense of truly using its capabilities. The sight of perfect healthiness around one is, even in bodily matters, a stimulus to a healthy habit, such as can come to us in few other ways. And far more in the affairs of the soul, in the attainment and preservation of a healthy tone, in the lesson of believing, through

Christ, in one's own capability of goodness, of one's own possibilities of restoration after innocence has been tampered with and forfeited, I know nothing more healthily delightful, nothing capable of enkindling higher hopes than the contemplation of innocence—and more than innocence—in the new-born children of GOD, restored and regenerated in baptism. For there we see in actual, daily exercise the possibilities, whose forfeiture, it may be, or at any rate whose loss of their first freshness, we have so often had to mourn in ourselves. Were it only inexperience in evil, only fresh simplicity of motive, only absence of the inevitable complexity which weaves itself round our characters in after years, even so the very contact of childish minds were a blessing to all who in later life are striving to secure for themselves some return to a fresher contact with things divine.

But regarded in a higher aspect still, in the light of what we know of a higher life, of a new nature conferred and to be developed, what help may not come to us in this way, from "keeping touch" with the purest of God's creatures?

In an exquisite sketch of a lovely character, recently given to the world, the writer says of

her friend :—"When one day he spoke of driving with him, as if it were only a dull thing to do, I told him that when he asked me I always came most gladly, and that I looked upon it as a 'means of grace.'" If I had to sum up the character of that friend, as one gathers a man's character from his writings, I should have said that its most strongly marked feature was the way that, through manhood to old age, he succeeded in retaining a child's heart.

Now if it has sometimes seemed "a dull thing" to us to be obliged to give our time up to children, let me suggest that a truer "means of grace" is hardly to be found in the world; that apart from the actual sacraments, wherein Christ makes us one with Himself, no outward and visible sign conveys a truer inward grace to the recipient than meeting Christ in the person of His little ones. Our Lord spake a mystery, no doubt, when He said to his disciples, of little children, that "in Heaven their Angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven." But obscure though it may be in its details, there is no doubt about its general purport, or about the closeness of sympathy which it implies between what is

divine and what is childlike. And where the Sayer of a dark saying is Divine, we do well to take heed no less closely, if His meaning be wrapped in some obscurity. Who knows how much of the obscurity is the result of our slowness of heart, of the dulling of our own inward sense, of the want of comprehension on our part of the blessedness which attaches to innocence? "In Heaven, their Angels do always behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven"—at least this means that there is a medium of communication between the Eternal Creator and little children, which is wanting to us of larger growth. God forbid, then, that we should despise them; should shrink, as from a dull, routine duty, should recoil, as from what is distasteful, when what we think of as our own maturer wisdom is taxed to find sympathy for childhood. It is they, the initiated ones, whose Angels see the face of the Father: it is they who must raise us to their level, not we who must condescend to them.

Indeed, to condescend to little children is to put yourself hopelessly out of sympathy with them. *Aspire* to be a child with them yourself, and they will let you have a share in their lives, will give

you glimpses of a world of their own, whence you, returning to the older sphere, may take back with you some trace of the illumination which has come to your unworthiness there.

To keep a child's heart, then, among children, is a lore more worth learning, in my eyes, than most lessons that can be learnt in older company.

Once more, the Eternal became a child, stooped to learn in an experience of His own what it is to see the world and human life with the eyes of wondering boyhood. Does not the thought take us back for a few minutes to

> "Those first affections
> Those shadowy recollections,
> Which, be they what they may,'
> Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
> Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
> Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the eternal silence" ?

One passed from Eternal repose, and came down for a few "noisy years" into the arena of strife in our lower world.

May that Holy Nativity and Incarnation, that

Childhood of GOD made Man bring us back to a childhood of the spirit, through which we may enter, converted, into a ceaseless communing with Himself.

CONVERSION.

"When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion; then were we like unto them that dream."—*Psalm* cxxvi. 1.

It sometimes happens that valuable words fall temporarily into a kind of discredit, either generally or with particular circles. And this is particularly the case with words which express the deep realities which underlie our personal religion. They may get distorted from their original meaning, or they may become overlaid with a set of associations which somehow serve to set people against them. Oftener still we find that an expression outlives the first freshness and fervour of the experiences which brought it into use. It came into vogue, it may be, when one set of ideas and experiences was paramount in the world of religious earnestness, and then it conveyed to those who used it associations the deepest and the most sacred which can ever touch the heart of a human being. The word was all glowing with life, because the thought which was

Bombay Cathedral, 1st Sunday in Lent. 1887.

conveyed by the word was the intensest of actual experiences to some of the holiest of men and women. Then perhaps there may arise a generation whose spiritual aspirations and experiences run in channels of a different kind; and to them the associations of the word can never be the same as to their fathers. Or the inheritors of the same doctrinal beliefs may lack something of the spiritual intensity which underlay the old use of the term. What their predecessors fought for and made their own they have peacefully entered into possession of: and the result it is very often found to be that what lay at the very core of all life to the generation which inaugurated a great movement degenerates into a matter of words and phrases to those who enter into their labours. And then the words and phrases become discredited. People hesitate before they make use of them, for fear their own good may be evil spoken of if they embody it in unpopular phraseology.

And yet it may be that the thoughts and the experiences, as distinguished from the phrases which embody them, may be such as we can never do without if christianity is to retain its vitality. And moreover there may be no other

word which will convey the indispensable truth with at all the same brevity and directness.

In some such way it has fared with the good old words, "converted," and ", conversion" The truth which is conveyed by those words is what I want to bring before you this evening, nay, what every preacher must frequently bring forward if he wants to do his duty by men's souls. And my vocabulary contains no other words which will serve equally well to express it. Yet I know that the associations of the words might set some of you against all that I have to say. When I speak of the need of being converted, you are inclined to ask if I divide my acquaintances, according to some standard of my own, into converted and unconverted persons; and treat some of them as spiritual outcasts and the remainder as having a monopoly of goodness. When I speak of the conversion of a sinner, you may ask whether I mean that for every one a single set of spiritual experiences, gone through at a specified period, and accompanied by certain states of feeling, is the indispensable condition of being saved. And according to your theological prepossessions, I might be asked, on the one hand,

whether I forgot the grace of baptism; and, on the other, whether I thought that all souls could be forced through one round of experiences; whether goodness was all of the same type; whether the home which has many mansions in Heaven has but one narrow chamber on earth.

Let us try, then, to get behind the expressions, and to start fair with the reality which is to be found there. Let us go back to the real meaning of the words, so deep, so utterly simple, so dissociated from all conventionality, so real beyond everything which can be compared with it.

Instead of saying, "except ye be *converted*," let us say, "except ye be *turned right round*, and become as little children, ye can in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Unless your soul is facing the right way, and that way not at all the way of nature, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. For that is the plain meaning of conversion: it simply means a turning right round: it simply means an attitude of the soul, but an attitude into which it has to get, not that in which it finds itself by nature.

Which of us is prepared to affirm that it comes to him in the natural course of things to refer all

that concerns him to God? Which of us is prepared to deny that if this is the posture of his soul, it is one which has been acquired by an effort, and sustained by continual watchfulness? In other words, which of all the souls which look out at me from the eyes that meet mine, is a soul which had no need to be converted?

It makes no matter when the turning took place, whether consciously, or, at least, partly unconsciously. It may have been that the one turning round which was vouchsafed when you were baptized into Jesus Christ, has sufficed, through the preventing grace of God, to keep you always with your face the right way; that you have never known a period in your life when you did not at least try to do right; that maintaining the posture in which you found yourself was all that was consciously required of you. But still it was not nature that so placed you: it was the grace of regeneration that turned you round. Nay, you know that if nature had had her way, that first turning would quickly have been undone.

Or it may be that though you once were facing wrong, yet the turning has been almost imperceptible, because it took place by slow degrees.

Still you know that at one time of your life your attitude was not what it is now.

Or your spiritual history may be very different; you may feel that, however it is with others, conversion, and sensible conversion, has been the deepest of realities to yourself. You would not perhaps insist on it for every one, but, as far as you are personally concerned, you feel that you owe everything to it.

But whensoever, and howsoever it may take place, of two things we are sure about conversion. We are sure that it is contrary to nature: else why is it called a turning round? We are sure that it is essential to our salvation: else why are we told by Jesus Christ that, "except ye be turned round and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven?"

If, then, it is essential to all of us, and if it comes to none of us by nature, let us try to look into it a little deeper, and see what it is in its essence. Let us give ourselves the opportunity now of testing whether we are converted or not.

The difference between converted and unconverted can be stated in very few words. It is

just the question, whether we look at our whole lives from the point of view in which God sees them.

But this acceptance of all things in God, this ranging ourselves upon His side, this willingness to see all things as He sees them, must include two principal things. We must have looked at our own past lives as they appear in the Eyes of Almighty God. And we must be regulating our life in the present by the light of the Commandments of God.

To look at our own past lives as they appear in the Eyes of Almighty God; clearing off all conventional glosses, to call things exactly what He calls them; tearing off that veil of tenderness which we all love to spread over our failings, to look straight at our derelictions of duty, to think of our own worst acts as they appear in the Eyes of Almighty God—the thing is not very easy to do. There are few who have the resolution or the honesty to look without blenching at themselves. There is a tortuousness about the consciences of most of us, which offers some cover to our worst actions; we gloss over the most flagrant of our failures; we find

formulæ which disguise them from ourselves; we trump up motives which lend them respectability; we draw out the causes which led up to them, and we flatter ourselves when we have explained our misdemeanours, that that which is explained is excused. "The serpent beguiled me and I did eat: the woman which thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat." It is the voice of the Lord God that we hear; yet we make as though the trees of the garden could shield us from the gaze of Omniscience.

If we only could get it fairly into our hearts that the whole story lies naked and open before a gaze which looks straight through and through us!

Look at it, then, fairly and for once. Bethink you whether black will become white, because you choose to look through a half light, and to say that you cannot see but it is grey. If you know that it is black none the less, then face it like a man, and see the worst of it.

For it is only when you have faced what you are that you learn what Jesus Christ can become to you. It is only when you look

at your past life, and see it as it is seen by Almighty God, that you can bring it to Him of your own accord and ask Him to see it away.

When once we are turned round to Almighty God and are looking at ourselves in His light, then the next sight which dawns upon our eyes is a glimpse of what He is; of how the Judge at whose tribunal we stand is the Brother who died to redeem us; of how the very Holiness of God is what longs to see holiness in us. The converted soul which is turned towards Him brings all that it knows itself to be to Him who is longing to make it different. It may perhaps have brought much to Him already; it may have been saved by His Love from having anything very heinous to bring. But at all events it comes with the frank admission that there is much, very much for Him to do before it will be what He would have it. Once brought and spread out before His feet, life begins to be different at once. Its damning blots disappear; they are no longer identified with ourselves, from the moment when the will, our truest self, is with Him in willing them away. For is not this just the turning round, that whereas by nature

we are against Him, whereas we were on the side of all this which He teaches us to look at so differently, we are now on the side of our Saviour in His longing to do it away?

The fact that it all has been remains. No mercy, no quickening grace can do away with the horrible truth that we sinned against the Love of our Father, that we did what was hateful in His sight, that we left out what He had longed that we should do.

But in this there lies the whole difference, that we ourselves in our deepest identity, that the whole ME which was formerly with it is now on the Lord's side against it; that now it is "true in us" as in Him, "that the darkness is passing and the true light now shineth," "that we are walking in the light as He is in the light," and "the Blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

Then follows that turning of the captivity, whose description suggested what I am saying to you—the soul like one that dreams, in the incredibleness of its new found happiness, the "mouth filled with laughter and the tongue with joy," as it realises its liberty in Christ, after the bondage of sin has been broken through.

"The Lord hath done great things" for it already, whereof it is constrained to rejoice. Great things indeed are done by this first turning round to the Saviour, nothing less than the clearance of the past, and the entering on a new course of life.

For this also is included in the great turning, that not only has the past been brought to God, that through Christ its guilt might be done away, but the present is dedicated to Him; that we are on the watch from hour to hour for opportunities of rendering Him service. That one great first sight of our lives, as they appear from the Divine point of view, is but an earnest of all that has to follow. The attitude of the soul from thenceforward is one long "looking unto Jesus." Its eye is fixed on the Divine-human Friend who has made Himself its all in all. It looks to Jesus to deliver it from itself, to complete the great work which He began when He interposed between us and the hated past.

From henceforth we must estimate all things as they bear on our relations with Him. Conversion, a turning right round, must mean this, or it cannot mean anything. We cannot be facing to God, if life have any bearing as important

as its bearing on what pleases or displeases Him. We cannot be looking unto Jesus, if we see anything without Him as its back-ground. Does it draw us towards Him or away from Him? Does it help us to be conformed to Him or to be unlike Him? Does it attract us with the thought of pleasing Him, or does it win us without regard to His approval? This test we must apply in all sincerity to everything which makes advances to us henceforward. Apart from Him we must know no enjoyment; with Him we must be prepared to share suffering. For Him we must be able to work, or equally ready to wait. To what has no relation to Him we must find ourselves increasingly indifferent. We shall have but one principal regret, that as yet we have learnt to serve Him so poorly? We must know but one paramount desire, to learn how to please Him entirely.

And if we are indeed turned to Him, that desire will be fulfilled by degrees.

"They that sow in tears," our Psalm goes on to say, "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that now goeth on his way weeping and beareth forth good seed, shall doubtless come again with joy and bring his sheaves with him."

TEMPTATION.

"Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed."—*St. James* i. 13.

I am to speak to you this evening about Temptation, that is to say, I am to speak to each of you about himself, as he stands every day of his life upon the verge of that tremendous alternative which is involved in the very notion of our freedom, of our being voluntary, responsible agents.

We can imagine but two conditions, in which temptation should form no part of our experience, being free as we know ourselves to be. We can imagine in a dim, distant way that blessed impossibility of evil which is the highest result of the use of freedom, that condition in which God is supremely loved, and in which anything which could separate us from Him would be inconceivably horrible and repulsive to us.

And we can imagine more easily, alas! that other most ghastly condition, in which the will is so abandoned to evil that it has chosen it, in a

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sense, as its good; that it is, practically, not tempted by evil, because evil has possessed it and saturated it, has past into the fibre of its being, until choice has quite ceased to be exercised and resistance can hardly be conceived of.

Neither state can be pictured by us in its fulness, because as yet our experience includes neither. Yet I think that there are phases of our experience which make either of them to some extent intelligible. There are depths of meanness or of other wickedness lying utterly out of the bent of one's character, out of the path of one's special aberrations, into which, according to our several idiosyncrasies, we cannot even imagine ourselves being betrayed. And in the light of these we can picture to ourselves what it would be to feel towards all evil as we feel towards some one special form of it. We can picture ourselves as incapable, for love of God, of choosing anything which would outrage His Holiness; just as we may know ourselves, for love of our home, to be incapable of violating its sanctity. And so we can attain to some notion of that happy incapacity for evil which shall characterise the blessed before the Throne, and

which even now makes the waiting saints of God incapable of choosing over again any of the things which betrayed them here on earth.

And, again, we can picture to ourselves how the evil which we love, although we loathe it, might assert itself so fiercely or so subtilely that we should cease even to think of it as evil, and might acquiesce in it, and choose it, and revel in it as no longer a temptation from time to time, but as the deliberate set of our whole being. We are not told in so many words that this choice of evil as good shall be made to eternity by any. But all we know of the tendencies of sin seems to point to such a ghastly conclusion as at least possible to those who delight in it.

But within the range of our present experience we have not known, and can with difficulty picture, a condition, in which temptation to evil should not be the necessary concomitant of the highest form of good.

For, to repeat, temptation is to each of us but the poise in which we find ourselves continually between the choice of God, our Chief Good, and the manifold alternatives of evil which thrust themselves between us and Him.

In other words, when we are drawn in two directions, when our will is set towards God and our inclinations are in conflict with our will—when this occurs, and so long as it lasts, we find ourselves under temptation. The moment that this ceases to be the case, we are no longer under temptation for the time being. There are two ways, then, in which we cease to be tempted—the victory of one of the two impulses whose encounter has constituted the temptation. When the will so prevails over inclination that we cease to be drawn in the wrong direction, then temptation has ended in victory. When the inclination has so prevailed over the will that we have ceased to resist and abhor it, then temptation has issued in defeat.

But in this issue two stages may be distinguished: there is, first, the guilty pleasure in what is evil, as it suggests itself, or is suggested by another, and then there is the actual consent to it. It is important that we should apprehend the distinction, because here is where the difference is to be found between our Lord's temptations and our own. The two stages are not always distinguishable; because sometimes

we yield ourselves so readily that we cannot say that we began to be attracted before we had actually consented. But very often we can distinguish them accurately, and at all events the distinction is a real one, and one which we are the better for understanding.

The first stage, then, in every temptation is perfectly inevitable and innocent; so much so, that Jesus Himself was liable to it exactly as we are. It consists simply in having it brought before us that we could either avoid pain or secure enjoyment by something which we know to be wrong—by omitting some duty which has claims on us, or by committing some act which is forbidden us. There need be no yielding whatever; we may regard the base alternative with loathing; but there stands the choice set before us:—do wrong, or omit right, and enjoy yourself; do right, or refuse wrong, and deny yourself. It may be some pleasure which allures us, or it may be some pain which threatens us, but practically the alternative is the same. The sole condition of being tempted is the alternative between right and wrong, with inclination on the side of the wrong. And in this

stage there is absolutely nothing sinful. No matter how vivid be the picture which is imprinting itself upon our kindled imagination; no matter how desperate the shrinking from the suffering which seems tingling in us already;—so long as we are not wilfully entertaining it and allowing ourselves to dally with it, or to delight in it, no fierceness and no softness of temptation is for a moment to be regarded as sinful. It comes simply from the fact that we are free agents, and that, being free, we have to face the great alternative.

And so it was that even Jesus Himself was liable to temptation as we are. He was liable to that first stage of temptation, in which obedience presented itself as self-sacrifice, and wrong-doing was known to be pleasurable; in which pain was foreseen and was shrunk from, and could be escaped by a compromise with duty.

But on this comes the next stage in the process, a stage which is terribly familiar to us; one which is not the inevitable result of the free will with which we have been created, but is the sad inheritance of sinners, of those who are free, indeed, to do right, but have a natural bias towards wrong.

Without actually abandoning ourselves to evil, or actually refusing what is right, we may begin, do sadly often begin, to take delight in the wrong alternative presented to us. Instead of totally refusing, as we ought, to dwell on the pain which we must suffer if we persevere in our adherence to what is right, we allow ourselves, more or less deliberately, to think how delightful it would be if we chose the softer alternative. Or instead of thinking resolutely of something else, to exclude the dream of sinful pleasure, we allow ourselves to dwell on the tempting picture which imagination is sketching on the canvas :— we will not do wrong, certainly not, but how charming it would be if we only might.

And so the first sinless stage is passed through, and we are fairly committed to the second; which has in it something of evil, because our will is no longer quite decided in thrusting away the temptation.

It is here that our case and our Lord's first cease to resemble one another. He never passed into the second stage, never knew any tampering with evil, never allowed Himself to dwell for an instant on the pleasure that might come by doing

wrong, or on the agony that it must cost Him to do right. These were vividly present to Him, no doubt, as we know from His prayer in the garden, when the fierceness of the agony that lay before Him was fully portrayed to His inward eye. But there was no yielding, no dallying, no half-compliance, but a steady "THY Will be done." It is, I suppose, impossible for us at all times to escape this second stage. It is not actually sinful as yet, though it may have the nature of sin;—to use a well-known theological distinction. It is one of the incidents of a sinful nature with its bias set in the wrong direction. We are, and we must be, inflammable, although we need not allow ourselves to be set on fire. We shrink, and we must shrink from suffering; though the shrinking be but the quiver of the tortured flesh, not the actual withdrawal of the limb from the contact with that which is abrading it.

The transition from this stage to the next is always fairly well marked. After pleasure in the temptation, comes assent to it; when the will no longer holds out, but throws itself on the side of the evil. As soon as this has fairly taken place,

temptation, strictly speaking, is over, and actual sin has begun. Consent is often called by theologians the third and final stage of temptation. I think it is more properly described as the first or initial stage of sin. For it is the consent of the will to what is evil which renders us sinful in GOD'S sight, before the inward consent has translated itself into overt act; nay, independently of the possibility of its doing so.

Temptation, then, is the evidence, and the penalty of the terrible prerogative of free-will The possibility of it bears witness to our freedom, to the balance in which we weigh opposing motives, and elect for, or refuse God' service. Without it man's service of God were of the same mechanical nature as that which is rendered by other creatures, who obey because they cannot do otherwise. We dare no murmur at the terrible liability without which all life were less noble ; dare not wish for the blissful immunity which would entail being without our highest privilege.

Temptation means suffering, of course ; it were a bad day for us if it ceased to mean suffering to be abhorrent to all our better nature.

Let me conclude, then, with some consolations and some warnings which follow from the nature of temptation, and from the possibility of being tempted without falling.

First, temptation is GOD'S greatest opportunity. It throws us in all our helplessness upon Him. There are those who would never have truly sought Him had it not been for the sense of their own weakness which came to them through stress of being tempted. There are those who to the end of their lives would never learn the lesson of self-distrust, were it not that some special form of evil makes so appallingly persuasive an appeal to them. They are driven into the arms of their Saviour by the knowledge that they cannot do without Him. "When I am weak, then I am strong": in other words, when I cannot save myself, I am compelled to fly to Jesus for succour.

If we look at temptation in this light, it becomes the most blessed of opportunities: it deepens our relations with our Saviour by displaying the fearful possibility of losing Him and making Him a stranger: it preserves the tender sense of dependence which is the secret

of abiding in Him. Believe that you can do without Him, and you will lose Him. Look to Him, and depend upon Him for all things, and He will take care of the rest.

But all this applies only to those temptations which are encountered in the plain course of duty. No help and no blessing can be looked for in those which are really of our own making. Our steps will be upheld by our Master in the path where we are walking on His errands: the difficulties which beset us in other paths He leaves us to encounter alone. I have distinguished two stages of temptation, the stage where we are only appealed to, and the stage where we have begun to take pleasure in it. But if we wilfully thrust ourselves into difficulties, then the earlier of these stages is omitted: for that which we voluntarily encounter we have sought just because it gave us pleasure. And when our heart has begun to glow within us, we are terribly near the final yielding. The avoidance of self-occasioned temptations is, therefore, the condition of being upheld. The company, the surroundings, the places which we know to be occasions of evil are to be avoided like

plague-stricken districts. Does your duty make it needful to encounter them, then, even so, go most cautiously to meet them. Go courageously, believing that you will be helped; go trusting to the Captain of your salvation; but, still, go warily, in self-distrust. If it be anything but a duty that takes you there, then refuse to stir a step in that direction. Give up what you cherish most dearly, do without what attracts you most winningly, rather than encounter occasions of evil for the mere gratification of your tastes.

A good rule for dealing with temptations would be—never despise one; never court one; never fear one.

Never despise one;—a weak enemy despised is apt to be unexpectedly formidable, much more the giant forces of evil which we all have to encounter every day; and not even the call of our Master can entitle us to go carelessly on our way. Never court one;—to court a temptation is as though you should lay aside your weapons before you encountered your enemy. Never fear one;—Unless you have first challenged it you can always make victory certain by encountering it boldly in His Name.

And, lastly, our liability to temptation should give us sympathy for all tempted souls. The results of resistance to temptation are not always as lovable as they might be. I have known distressing irritability left behind after a battle had been successfully fought out. And when the stress of temptation is present, it is apt to display itself in a certain egotism which results from concentration on one's own difficulties. But, however it may display itself to us, the state of a tempted soul surely calls for our deepest sympathy; the more, perhaps, where it appears the more unlovely,—"considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." There is nothing more helpful at such moments than just to let a person feel,—you are understood; allowances are made for your difficulties; there is sympathy for what you have to encounter. And the want of fellow-feeling of this kind may aggravate the difficulties of a tried soul, so as to drive it almost to despair.

It is a consolation at our own darkest moments to know that we are treasuring up experience which will enable us thus to sympathise with others. And, believe me, as life goes on, there are few things that one prizes so dearly as the

painful memories which open our hearts, and make our fellows turn naturally to us when their needs crowd importunately upon them. The "years that bring the philosophic mind" bring no better philosophy than this,—that no price is too heavy to pay for the power to enter into people's difficulties.

"Count it all joy," then, as St. James bids us do, "when ye fall into divers temptations";—so long as they are not of your own making, and so long as no sin is the result of them. Count it joy to be driven to your Saviour, when perhaps you had not sought Him without them: count it joy to have been allowed to bear something to show that you respond to His love: count it joy to have learnt from your own difficulties to be tender over the difficulties of others. Let only one kind of temptation be really a matter of bitter sorrow, and let that be the culpable temptation which you have brought upon yourself by your own rashness.

GOD'S MERCY, A MOTIVE FOR HOLY FEAR.

Psalm cxxx, 4. "For there is Mercy with Thee: therefore shalt Thou be feared."

De profundis, is the title of this Psalm, the best known of the Latin titles in our Prayer-book—*de profundis*, the cry to GOD out of the deep. Out of the deep of its own misery and lost estate, sunk away below helping, below effort, below all possibility of being rescued except through the loving-kindness of its Creator, the soul which knows its own sinfulness cries to Him to raise it up and to restore it.

"Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice." No claim can it put forward to His attention, no deserving for which its prayer should be heard, save only this,—that it does cry out of the deep. Its sole claim is that it puts forward no claim, but relies on what it knows of its Creator. "Out of the deep"—yes, truly, but—"unto Thee"; unto

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Thee with Whom the depth of our need is the pledge that our cry shall be heard.

"O let Thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint." So we cry because we know of Him Who hearkens, that He

"Knows all; yet loves us better than He knows;"

Knows all that we would fain keep back from our very nearest; knows all, and loves on in despite. If any other were attentively to consider what we are, and how we made ourselves what we are, we know too well that our prayer would receive no answer. But to Him the soul turns with all confidence, and prays Him to consider its complaint; for with Him to consider is to forgive. "If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? For there is mercy with Thee, therefore Thou shalt be feared." Here we come to the thought which I have chosen as the subject to be considered this evening,—that the mercy, the tender compassion of our GOD, that His allowances for weakness, his forgivingness to sin are exactly, in the eyes of the true penitent, the deepest reason for fearing to offend Him.

It sounds almost a contradiction, for a moment, that the mercy, the forgivingness of any Being should be itself the very reason for fearing Him. And yet I think that by considering it for a minute, we shall see that it is no contradiction,—that it is exactly and inevitably true.

For think, first, what the fear of GOD is in the minds of those for whom this Psalm means so much;—no dread such as slaves might entertain for the master who lords it over them ruthlessly, but a fear whose first essential is this,—that what we dread most of all, if we have once known Him, is that anything should part us from Him. To have leant upon His bosom, forgiven, and then to lose Him, to be a stranger to Him for ever,—there surely were the fear of all fears to one who knows the sweetness of His love.

And yet there is another fear of GOD which is essential to serving Him as we ought. We, none of us, are so strong or so holy that we can afford to lose sight, all our lives, of the terror of His judgments against evil. For evil, alas that we should have to say it! is so connatural to us, so bound up with our present state; its appeals to us are so constant and so subtil, that

it must be met not only by love of GOD, but by the remembrance, deliberately called to mind, that unless we root it out of our being, that unless we be finally freed from it, it has power to bring us, even us, into that hopeless conflict with Him, the end of which is the worm that never dieth. And here, too, it is the thought of His mercy, of His slighted willingness to forgive, which in the mind of the thoughtful believer adds most force to the terrors of the Lord. "There is mercy with Thee; *therefore* shalt Thou be feared." Thou art ready to forgive to the uttermost, to hear the cry that proceeds from the lowest deep, and, therefore, before all things, it is that those who refuse to be forgiven, that those who love wallowing in the deep, have most cause to tremble before Thy Judgments.

I have thought it well to choose this as our subject—that GOD does, nay, that God must punish sin; because, perhaps, there is no doctrine of our faith, about which there is less of clear thinking, or more of unguarded speaking, among those who think at all upon such subjects.

For this, two causes are mainly responsible. Very many thoughtful people, as you know, have been driven into total unbelief by reaction from the hideous misconceptions which have disfigured the popular preaching of more than one school of religion.

I will not stop to glance aside at these disfigurements; for I believe that in this, as in other cases, the temperate statement of balanced truth is the only sure antidote for error. You will see, as I develope my subject, how little my thoughts have in common with the doctrines which would drive you to unbelief.

But I must dwell for a few minutes, at this point, on the other of the causes which I have mentioned as responsible for loose thinking and rash speaking on the subject of God as a Judge, of Omnipotence as dealing with moral evil.

There is a certain relaxation of moral fibre too common among us to-day, which leads people to extenuate evil, to think of it as inevitable, as excusable, as merely a one-sided development of things which are part of our very nature. And

this over-tenderness with ourselves, this excusing and palliation of what is worst in us, leads on to thoughts about God which exclude from our conception of His Nature the whole aspect which I wish to bring before you. We tend to rob God of His Holiness, to reduce Him to the image of sinful man, in order that our conceptions of Him may be brought, as it were, into line with our treatment of evil in ourselves. Our material prosperity and self-indulgence are mainly responsible, believe me, for our shrinking from dwelling as we ought on our Father's abhorrence of evil. If the ideal of our personal lives be nobility in thought and in act, if it include, as true nobility must include, an uncompromising detestation of baseness, if it be founded upon a sense of right and wrong which permits of no tampering with sin, of no arrangements, in the ultimate resort, between conscience and the things that it disapproves of, then be sure that our conceptions of God must include as almost their first condition, the belief that His attitude towards evil will be that of stern, awful reprobation, where evil is obstinate and unrepentant.

But if comfort, enjoyment, self-indulgence be to any of us, in the ultimate resort, the standard by which things are estimated; if the one, last, uncompromising question about anything and everything which comes before us be not, is it right? but, is it pleasant? if conscience hold out to a certain point, and then, between a smile and a sigh, we disguise from ourselves the baseness of our decisions; if compliance, not self-repression, be the last word that we have to say to our own lusts, then surely, inevitably, irrecoverably, our conceptions of God and of His justice must be lowered to the requisite degree for falling in with our own moral standard.

Now I believe that I am not going too far when I say that with very many at the present day, the favourite presentment of Almighty GOD is that of a Being supremely powerful, Whose single principle in relation to His creatures must be that of promoting their comfort. The word sounds incongruous, I know, but my use of it is not irreverent: I put the matter thus boldly of set purpose. Were I to substitute the word happiness, or even blessedness, in place of

comfort, incongruous as that sounds, I should fail to convey my real meaning, for blessedness and, to some extent, happiness are associated with some notion of morality, of some connection between desert and enjoyment. And the characteristic of the tone of mind which I so deprecate is that it thinks of Him, the Supreme Holiness, the perfect Goodness, as though He would so deal with His creatures as to give them enjoyment independently of deserving. Nay, when we speak of Him as punishing sin, as exacting from beings who have sinned some punishment proportionate to their deserts, we are charged with presenting for your adoration a Being vindictive and cruel.

Now I will ask you to put aside altogether all popular and highly-coloured representations of the nature of punishment hereafter, as being, for the most part at any rate, a distortion of one or two phrases which are figuratively used in Holy Scripture. And then I ask you to dwell with me for a few minutes on one or two broad principles of right and wrong which underlie all sound thinking on such a subject. If you will dwell quite dispassionately upon these, I cannot think

that you will refuse to go with me when I say that God's punishing sin is a law of His very Being and Holiness.

I ask you first, then, to put this before yourself: —whether the notion of punishment as punishment, of punishment as following appropriately on wrong-doing simply as such, be not absolutely inseparable in your mind from the belief that there is a right and that there is a wrong. Put aside all notion of reformation, put aside all notion of prevention; think neither of improving the offender nor yet of protecting other people, and still, I ask, does not this remain behind, unaffected, inevitable as ever, that wrong-doing, simply as such, ought to bring retribution on the wrong-doer? that enjoyment for one who has done wrong, enjoyment independent of repentance, enjoyment which knows no interruption from the thought of the wrong that he has done, is something totally and hideously incongruous, contradictory to our sense of right and wrong.

Or take all this out of the region of abstractions, and translate it into the language of experience. Think of any wrong-doer that you have known, of any one who has foully wronged his

neighbour, who has brought misery where before there had been happiness, who has dragged down a pure life to his own level; and then ask yourself as you think of such a man—is your notion of punishment for him confined solely to the thought of making him better, or of protecting other homes from such wrongs? I say, no, a thousand times no. It is the thought of the true appropriateness of vengeance that crowds in on us when we hear of such things, of vengeance as no private gratification, of vengeance quite apart from vindictiveness; of vengeance not as due to the injured persons, but as due to the outraged majesty of right.

Nay, I go farther: I say that without this, without the thought that evil, as evil, is appropriately followed by pain, we shall lose the very notion of right and wrong as being anything more than mere expediency.

And here, again, I would take you back to first principles. I ask you now to put this to yourself:—When you speak about right and wrong, what is it that you mean by the words? When you say to yourself that such a thing is right, do you mean simply that for you and for

other people it will be better in the long run that you should do it? When you say that such another thing is wrong, do you mean only that for you and for other people it will be better in the long run that you should abstain from it?

It has been attempted again and again to reduce right and wrong within these lines; to prove that it is only our early training which makes us think of them in any other way; that it is only the teaching of long experience, convincing the human race about their consequences, which has made us treat murder and robbery as wrong in any different sense from that, in which, for instance, it is wrong to overtire ourselves or to be careless about our money. Each of these things, we are told, is inexpedient, but robbery and murder are inexpedient in a totally different degree from that in which carelessness is inexpedient: and so all of us have had the notion drilled into us that while carelessness is only unadvisable, theft and bloodshed are criminal and deserve punishment.

This pulpit is perhaps not the place for exposing the foundations of these sophistries.

The appeals which are made to you from here must fall back on the primary, healthy instincts which we must not allow ourselves to be reasoned out of. And so I confine myself to asking you this question :— When philosophy has reasoned its utmost, do you find yourself convinced, after all, that your Mother was wrong in the old days, when she comforted you after you had hurt yourself, and punished you after you had been naughty ? when she treated the inexpediency of bruising yourself as something radically and essentially different from the naughtiness of quarrelling or lying ? You were taught then that the intention makes the act, that if you meant to give pain and to bring tears you were doing what was worse than inexpedient. Are you prepared to treat that teaching as all wrong ?

If not, then put this to yourself :— Does not everything that you believe of right and wrong teach you this about God and His dealings, that if He, the Omnipotent, does not punish, then He is not as good as He is powerful ?

Now fall back on your experience in another form. Have you not learnt through your know-

ledge of life, learnt increasingly with each day which has passed over you, that, apart from all punishment from without, evil brings its own penalties with it? Have you done one wrong thing in your life which did not leave you the poorer for having done it—the poorer, I mean, in those things wherein alone true wealth is to be found? Have you ever been carried away by your passions without finding that the fact of your compliance left you so far more open to their assaults? Have you ever lost mastery of your lower self without finding that its hateful supremacy asserted itself more fiercely than before, for the fact that you had allowed it to prevail? Have you ever been selfish and grasping without selling a very part of yourself as the purchase-money of what you acquired? Have you ever been vindictive or cruel without finding that the milk of human kindness had been dried in your bosom as the result?

What, I ask you, is the meaning of this experience? It is that the stern law of retribution is written upon your own life and nature, that you cannot explain it away out of GOD'S Nature without first being false to your own.

When we say that God punishes sin, we are in effect saying this, and no more—that He will give free scope in the after-life, to the same laws under which we live here; to the law that the deeds of the wrong-doer return surely and without fail upon himself in the ruin that they bring upon his nature; to the law that our right deeds and our wrong deeds are distinguished essentially from one another, not simply as expedient and inexpedient; that every one of our wrong actions is not simply a violation of expediency, but the transgression of a primary rule, independent of, and prior to, results; to the law that sin merits suffering as its meed, not simply for reformation or for prevention, but as the desert of the sinner himself.

Turn back with me, then, in conclusion, to the point from which we took our departure. The soul crying to GOD out of the deep utters this as the very climax of its supplication:—"For there is mercy with Thee; therefore shalt Thou be feared." It knows Him as the Vindicator of His Own Holiness; it knows Him as the Pardoner of sinners. And knowing Him as Avenger and as Pardoner, it says that then He is most to be

feared, when we remember His willingness to pardon.

The Avenger of sin is yet the Pardoner. Loathing evil as Holiness must loathe it, He yet separates the sinner from the sin, if only, fallen, sinful as we are, we are willing to be separated from it. He sees us, the violators of His sanctity, as yet capable of being saved from ourselves.

More than that: from the height of His Own Sanctity, He has stooped to take our cause upon Himself, to come down into the arena of our struggle, to fight for us, and to fight in us against our sins. It is He, the Avenger of the sin, Who has yet stooped to be the Saviour of the sinner. If we are not hopelessly in love with our own destruction, He is ready to destroy our destroyer, and to liberate us from the bondage of corruption.

If we fall under His sentence hereafter, it means only that we have deliberately refused to be parted from that which He condemns. The rejection of His mercy in Christ Jesus, offered separately, in tender love, to every one of us, is what alone can bring you or me under the sentence which He shall pass upon evil. "Truly

there is mercy with Thee; therefore shalt Thou be feared."

His sentence is written upon evil—in the unchanging law of our own nature, that whoso loveth evil shall be given over to it, shall increasingly be defiled with it and enslaved to it. His sentence is written upon evil—in the instinct which tells every one of us that wrong-doing, that the deeds of the base motive run counter to a principle of justice lying deeper than the law of mere results. His sentence is written upon evil—in the consciousness that suffering is its meed, not simply for reformation or for prevention, but by a sequence of eternal fitness which approves itself to every noble nature. But deepest of all is it written thus—that He Himself became the Conqueror of evil, triumphed over it here, in our own nature, that we might triumph over it in Him; and that we reject or hurl back his proffered gift of deliverance through His mercy.

The soul crying up to Him from the deep sees that mercy held out to itself, stretches out to it, embraces it, is lifted up by it; it looks back into the depth of its own misery, it looks up

again to the Deliverer in His Compassion; then sighs out, in shuddering dread of its own faithlessness, the horror of the sentence that must crush it, if once having been rescued from itself, it should choose to return into the depths:—"for there is mercy with Thee; *therefore*, shalt Thou be feared."

THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST'S SORROW ON OUR SYMPATHY.

"And I if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."—*S. John* xii. 32.

The scene in which these words occur is one of the most tenderly suggestive in the whole of that marvellous life whose closing hours are brought before us this week. On the evening, as it would appear, of the same day on which our Lord rode in triumph into Jerusalem, He was approached in the temple precincts by some Greeks who had come to worship at the Feast. He had been escorted in lowly pomp into the city by the short-lived Messianic enthusiasm of His fervid, though unstable fellow-countrymen, and had passed straight from their welcomes and plaudits to view the scene of the deadly struggle which He was on the eve of commencing with His enemies. He entered the sacred precincts, from which on a former occasion He had ejected the buyers and sellers.

Bombay Cathedral, Palm Sunday, 1879.

And in the renewal of the old profanation He must have read the determined nature of the opposition which He was about to provoke anew. He must have recalled the boding words with which He had replied to His opponents, when they challenged Him three years before to vindicate His cleansing of God's House:—"Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will rear it up." Those words, as He knew full well, were about to find their fulfilment. He was for the second time entering on the task of vindicating the sacredness of God's House, and He knew that the enmity which He was challenging would, this time, be successful in its vindictiveness.

He had looked round about upon all things, we are told by the Evangelist S. Mark, and now as the eventide was come, He was about to leave the city, to return on the following morning and begin the final struggle. And at this moment of stern determination, with the Hosannas still ringing in His ears, with His whole nature braced up for the contest which He knew was to end with His death, the homage of these cultivated strangers is delicately offered to His acceptance. It would lead us too far from

our present purpose, were I to draw your attention to all that is suggested by this meeting of Greek and Jew, almost over the open grave from which Lazarus had so recently been called forth. But I would ask you to consider, for the present, how the claim of Christ's sorrow upon our sympathy is brought out by the manner of his reply, when the Greeks introduced themselves to His notice. To the coarser plaudits of the multitude there is now added the subtiler flattery of homage from more cultivated men. And we should have supposed that to a mind on the strain, as I have shown you that His mind must have been, there would be something peculiarly grateful in being thus delicately courted by strangers. He might have laid Himself out, we would think, to gratify their reverent curiosity, and to display His own worthiness of their attention. If the homage of the most cultured race that the world had ever seen could be added to the Messianic enthusiasm of the worshippers of the One true God, to what a pinnacle of greatness unequalled might the recipient hope to rise?

"The hour is come," He says, "that the Son

of man should be glorified." His spirit is being fired, it would appear, by the prospect that is opening before Him;—yes, glorified, but glorified how? in the only way in which the Saviour of the world can pass to His final glory:—"Verily, verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve Me let him follow Me: and where I am there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour."

He proclaims at this moment of exaltation, that He and His followers alike must pass to glory through suffering and death. Nor is He ashamed before these expectant strangers, to show how deeply His human spirit was stirred by the anticipation of anguish:—"Father, save me from this hour. Yet for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name."

Yes, suffering for Him, glory for His Father;—for these the lowly Jesus had lived, and these should be consummated by His death. And when that strange voice from

Heaven had testified to the fulfilment of His desire, then He rises to the thought of what should follow, when He Himself should have been made perfect through suffering;—should follow not for Himself, but for the world of His human brethren:—"now is the Judgment of this world, now is the Prince of this world cast out; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

The power of sanctified sorrow to cast out the Prince of this world; the possibility of bringing into human life a new potency more powerful than men's homage; the glory of suffering and sorrow, and its power over the hearts of men;—these thoughts were uppermost in His mind when this flattering homage was offered to Him.

And this I would put forward as the first claim which Christ's sorrow has upon our sympathy;—that sorrow was the sorrow of One who preferred suffering for the benefit of others, to the flattery and applause of the world.

The enthusiasm of the vulgar, and the flattery of the more educated, the hosannas of the pious, and the enquiries of the curious, had combined to make that moment in the temple represent

the highest point of popularity which Christ had yet attained. The thought of the coming agony was entering like iron into His soul. No stoical indifference supported Him; no shame of human weakness restrained Him. He cries, as He cried afterwards in Gethsemane, to be saved, if it might be, from what was coming. But, the prayer ended, He turns deliberately away, and chooses suffering in preference to applause. His thoughts are for GOD and His brethren. For Himself He can bear what is to come.

The second claim of Christ's sorrow upon our sympathy, which I would bring before you this evening, is that He taught us the power of suffering over the hearts and consciences of men:—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." He saw that it was by the majesty of woe that He could draw the world to His feet. The very way in which He expressed it shows the agony which was present to His mind in all the vividness of keen anticipation:—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth." In the words there is a ring of twofold meaning, of physical and of spiritual anguish. To be lifted up upon the Cross

meant to hang in shame and agony before the eyes of friend and foe, to be tortured with wounds in hands and feet, and to be spent with fever and thirst;—all these are present to His mind, but in the thought of being lifted up from the earth, there is a deeper significancy still. It is the isolation of solitary anguish that the words so vividly suggest. Lifted up from the kindly earth, common mother of a suffering race; lifted away from the touch of loving hands which can minister sympathy at least, where they cannot bring relief; hanging in terrible solitary suffering, suspended helpless and forlorn;—do not the words seem to suggest what is well-known to all who have suffered intensely? The unapproachableness of all great grief sounds, to my ears at least, in the words; —the impossibility of sharing with another the bitterness which one's own heart knows; the break-down of all human sympathy, when the worst point of sorrow is reached; the sense that one is far away from earth, and yet not perceptibly nearer heaven. Lifted up from the earth, in the morbid sensitiveness which feels as though all eyes were upon it, and it was made a

mark for observation rather than an object for sympathy;—the terrible solitude of grief is almost its least endurable burden. And He, more than all other men, was thus to be lifted up from the earth, unapproachable from the greatness of His sorrow, unapproachable from its dread mysteriousness. And yet it is of all this that He says, that if He be lifted up from the earth, He will draw all men unto Him. He believes in the fruitfulness of sorrow, while He realizes its terrible isolation; believes in its power to attract, while He knows how little it can be relieved. His claim upon our sympathy is that He teaches us the glory of suffering; He shows that, as a power in the world, as a means of helpfulness to others, as a means of multiplying in life that expansive moral force which welds human hearts together, and sets forward the unity of mankind, it may be better to be desolated by sorrow than to bask in the sunshine of joy.

He clothes the barrenness of anguish with a fruitfulness unknown to joy, when He teaches us that the spirit of wordliness may be cast out by sorrow lovingly borne:—"Now is the Judgment

of this world, now is the Prince of this world cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

But, my friends, there is a deeper claim still, which Christ's sorrow has upon our sympathy. There is yet another reason why we so often think at Passion-tide of those words from the Lamentations of Jeremiah, "Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." Christ's sorrow deserves our sympathy, because of what it has done for ourselves. I appeal to that sense of sin which is to be found in every heart, from which impenitence or unbelief have not driven it, to that desire to be reconciled to God, so natural to the heart of man, so open to the appeals which He makes to us. If you do but give ordinary fair-play to one of the deepest instincts of your nature, it will need but few words of mine to tell you that in approaching the All Holy, you must approach Him in the attitude of a sinner; that a sense of personal demerit, and an acknowledgment of His offended Majesty is bare conformity to the requirements of the situation. You know, if you know yourself at all, that your return for the love

which He has spent on you has been a return of ingratitude; that self and the things of self have obscured the claims of His service; that the soul which He gave you to cultivate, and to bring into subjection to Himself, has been allowed to luxuriate and run wild in the exuberance of its own self-will. If you know of no grievous sins, by which you have broken His commandments, you know of hardly less grievous neglects by which you have failed to keep them. And you know that for all these things He will one day bring you into judgment. Do not stifle the conviction or hurl it from you. It comes to you as an inspiration from God. But ask yourself how you are to prepare yourself for the judgment which you know to be impending, and you will find that you know only one way—the sorrow of Jesus Christ for your sins. That was why He was so utterly unapproachable when He was lifted up from the earth; yet that, before all things, is the reason why His sorrow draws all men unto Him—that it was borne as a sacrifice for sin. Let us be among those who draw near to gaze reverently upon the spectacle of His suffering. Do not let Him say to you this week, with

the reproach which He addresses to the world, "Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow."

It cannot be nothing to you, that sorrow of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you refuse your proper share in its benefits, yet still it is everything to you: it is everything to you for condemnation, if it be not everything for redemption. Allow yourself, then, during this week to be drawn in loving contemplation to the Cross on which He was lifted up. Come and take some part, if you can, in the common worship, by which we shall be striving to express our sympathy with the Crucified. If you have no sympathy with His Passion, then ask yourself why you have not. Is it because you have never cared to have an interest in that which the Passion procured? For that, my friends, is the last reason why Christ's sorrow has a claim upon our sympathy;—because that sorrow, if so we will have it, procured our eternal salvation:—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me;" will draw them to the foot of the Cross to bewail their sinful lives in the thought

of what they have cost; will draw them to join themselves to Me by prayer and penitence and faith; will unite them by the sacraments of grace, to the virtue of the atoning sacrifice, will offer up their sorrow to God in union with the One Offering once offered.

O Jesus, lifted up for our sakes in the shame and sorrow of Thy Passion, so draw us by the fellowship of Thy sufferings, in prayer and penitence and faith, that yielding ourselves to Thy loving persuasions, we may, through Thee, be reconciled to the Father.

CHRIST'S HUMAN ANGUISH ON THE CROSS.

"Of whom the world was not worthy."—*Hebrews*, xi. 38.

There is a tinge of inevitable melancholy about the grandest human lives. Dissatisfaction with things as they are, a consciousness of the innumerable incongruities of the disjointed world around them, a reaching out of wistful hands after a higher and more adequate standard than that of ordinary men, the gaze of eyes full of eternity on the pettinesses and inadequacies of time, the groping for a surer foot-hold of feet which cannot be trained to the miry ways of conventionality—these things are the inevitable penalty of the highest moral greatness. The consciousness of the possession of truth which is unwelcome to the world around; the sense of living by a standard which is not, and will never be, accepted by the mass of his fellow-men, and which he can yet clearly see to be the only standard to live by—these again have formed part of the burden of

Bombay Cathedral, Good Friday, 1879.

the great of every age. Moral truth, to such a mind as I am contemplating, is no unsubstantial abstraction, no theory, in whose fate he is interested as men are interested in what lies outside them. He himself has wooed and won her at the cost of the sacrifice of himself. She has shown her face to him, though she hides it from less faithful lovers, she has admitted him into the secrets of her heart; she has made herself his own for ever; and a stain upon the honour of his mistress has become an affront to himself. He loves her with a chivalrous devotion which to lower minds is inconceivable.

A word which reflects upon her is to him like the cut of a lash. The fineness of moral fibre which gives him his hold upon truth, the delicacy of the spiritual sensitiveness, by which he appreciates its beauty, the power of realising and feeling where other men but gaze without sympathy—these things, while they constitute his greatness, make up also his capacity for pain. Self is fined away from his temperament, and, with it, many of the vulgar pains and pleasures, by which other men are swayed: but a whole world of new sensibilities have come in to take

its place. The very nerves and fibres of the man's nature are strung up with the substance of his beliefs. Nay, he does not believe he *knows*, and his knowledge is a part of himself, an instinct, a feeling and a sense, by which he communicates with the unseen.

The life of such a lover of truth must needs be one of pain. He is forced to live in a world whose maxims of daily dealing are a standing contradiction of her teaching, a constant impeachment of her honour. His soul is vexed from day to day by seeing her teaching set aside for sordid considerations of expediency. His sensitiveness is treated as quixtoism: what are to him the most certain of truths are set aside as the fictions of a day-dreamer; and his tears over insults to his principles are treated as the selfish complainings of one who is too tender for this world.

And it has happened not once or twice, that to add to the bitter mortification of seeing principles rejected, for which he cares more dearly than for life, the rejection has been accompanied and aggravated by bitter personal animosity. It is not in Jerusalem alone that the

prophet has been driven to complain that he was born "a man of strife and contention." Nor was Socrates the only good man, in whom Plato's words were fulfilled, when he said that a man of perfect justice, if such should appear on the earth, would be persecuted and tortured in life, and die by a shameful death.

There is a portrait by Fra Bartolomeo in a cell of San Marco, at Florence, under which some admiring follower has written the following inscription :—

Hieronymus Savonarola, Ferrarensis, Propheta a Deo missus :—Girolamo Savonrarola of Ferrara, a Prophet sent from God.

We may not quite literally accept the words of the enthusiast who wrote it; but, as we stand in imagination, in the horrible chamber of torture, and see the almost saviour of the fickle Florentine people, as he passed from torment to torment beneath the ruthless hands of his enemies, we learn something of that hatred of goodness because it comes from God, by which, in all ages of the world, the greatest and best have been tried. The voice which from the pulpit of the Duomo had worked on the listening people until

they proclaimed Jesus Christ as the king of the Florentine Republic, comes broken and faltering now from the rack on which he is stretched. But is he more alone at this moment, when torn from all whom he loved, than he was in the most splendid moments of his political and oratorical triumphs? He learns in bitterness now what had been too true throughout—that he was one "of whom the world was not worthy." But the world was unworthy of him when he seemed to have it at his feet. He followed truth for itself: others followed but the glowing words in which he thundered it to them. He lived to proclaim Jesus Christ as the ruler of human society. They followed so long as it was the fashion, and then the greater part fell away. And so he was alone in his life, even as he was alone at its close; as hero and as martyr alike, too glorious for comprehension or sympathy.

But it is not these things alone that constitute the martyrdom of the great. There is a martyrdom of daily isolation in an unsympathetic world; and there has been a martyrdom for some of them, at the hands of those who could not understand them. But, besides, there is the

daily suffering of their own unworthiness of the cause.

That others should be false to the truth—this indeed is suffering to her hero, but suffering which is tempered by the thought that others sin in ignorance and blindness.

But that himself, her sworn votary, her knight who has watched his armour in the vigil of stern preparation, her lover who knows her secrets and who dwells with her hidden beauties;—that he should prove untrue to her, and in her, untrue to himself—this indeed in a worm in the bud. When others cast shame upon her, he could make what reparation was possible by his own enthusiastic devotion. But when he himself has been false, who shall stand to redress the wrong? The remorse, as the chivalry, of the great is something which lesser men must never hope to understand. We may know in our own little way what it is to have striven and failed. We may say with the heathen poet, "I see and I appreciate what is better, yet that which is worse I choose." Humility of that kind, my friends, is a sadly easy virtue. But it is the knightly soul of a S. Paul that cries in the agony of failure,

"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" To be vile and to know that you are vile, to long to do better and to fail—these are sadly common experiences. But to attain to a higher conception of what our standard ought to be; to live by that standard so far as to know the glories of holiness; to have struggled and prayed and attained, and lived close to the example of the Saviour, and to feel in that higher region the clogging of daily infirmity; to have attained to a holiness so spotless that a tinge shows upon it like a stain; to have kept the conscience so tender that a sin eats into it like a brand; and then to feel the agonising presence of evil that has still to be cast out; to feel that standard contradicted by something unworthy of it; to toil on like Browning's *Childe Roland*, across the ghastly plain of death, and feel that perhaps at the last there was but failure in our scope—"and all the doubt was now—should" we "be fit?" that indeed is a refinement of suffering which only the worthy can reach.

My friends, we are called upon this morning, in the course of our Holy Week Meditations, to contemplate the human anguish of our Lord

Jesus Christ upon the Cross. In trying to lead your thoughts to the subject, I have chosen the highest specimens of the humanity which our Lord represents. I have asked you to think of some who have been like Him, to draw you up to Himself. He was the flower and the crown of our Humanity, the great One of the great ones of the earth. And all that I have said about others applies with ten-fold force to Him. He had lived as the representative of goodness in the midst of an ungodly people, in the midst of that worst of ungodliness which takes the guise of religion. He had been the champion of goodness in its struggle with the evil of the world. Many others are the champions of goodness, He was its very embodiment. Other men are the lovers of a justice which they have sought out and idealised on their own account; whose cause they have identified with themselves till they have lost themselves in the cause. But He was not the champion of an ideal: He was the representative of a living Father: He was "come, a Light into the world," not as others who hold up a light which they dare not call their own, but Himself the Illumination which

He brought, Himself the Light which He upheld, Himself One with the Father of lights, One in consubstantial glory with the Goodness of which all human goodness is but the feeble and fitful reflection. The cause of goodness and holiness and truth was His own, was bound up with Himself. "For this cause was I born," He had said, "and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

And when "jesting Pilate" had asked Him, in words which will live to all time as the embodiment of cynicism incarnate, "What is Truth?" the reply, had he been worthy to hear it, would have been, "I *am* the Truth." Thus He spake to His disciples at the supper-table:—"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

He lived and moved in a world where daily rejection was encountered, and He knew that the rejection of Himself was the daily rejection of the truth:—"I am the Truth * * * no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." And they would not believe nor accept Him, and now it had come to this, that He was hanging in final rejection upon the Cross of suffering and shame.

All the outrage of personal indignity had been added to the rejection of His message.

It is not to His bodily sufferings that I desire to draw your attention. Though the exceeding sensitiveness of frame which belonged to His perfect Humanity must have given Him a capacity of pain unknown to coarser subjects, yet this was not the first characteristic of His human anguish on the Cross. Savanarola in the torture-room at Florence, or martyrs whose anguish on the cross went on for days before it ended, may have suffered degrees of pain which were comparable to that of our Lord. That which made the sufferings of our Lord stand unique in the annals of anguish was the knowledge that in rejecting Himself men rejected truth and salvation. What was done to Him physically at that moment was the type and shadow of that to which spiritually He has been subjected in all ages. Those Christians who are false to their baptism, the writer of this Epistle says, "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." It is true He knew that by His death He was purchasing the creation of the redeemed, who in all ages should

yield themselves to Him. It is true that being lifted up from the earth, He was now drawing all men unto Him.

But alas! those who lifted Him up were but the first of a mighty number who in after times should reject Him. There were those who would not be drawn with even those "cords of love," by which He was attracting the world. Truth rejected, Himself rejected, their own salvation rejected, He saw them turning sullenly away from all that He had come to offer.

But in the cases which I brought before you just now there was another feature of suffering besides the rejection of Truth. I said that the keenest pang to the chivalrous lover of Truth is his own unworthiness of her. And here it may have occurred to your minds that I could not be about to draw a parallel between our Lord and other great men. Surely He had been the spotless champion of the Truth for which He died. Surely at least in the bearing of This Knight the stainless honour of His loved one had been reflected. Surely He at least had nothing to accuse Himself of:—

"All we like sheep have gone astray: we

have turned every one of us to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "He hath made Him to be sin for us which knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

No parallel between their case and His! In very deed no parallel;—they answer for their own shortcomings; and He, for those of the world. No parallel between their case and His! in very deed no parallel;—for their conscience, pure though it be, is still the conscience of sinners; and His, of the spotless Lamb. And the burden of the sin of the whole world was lying upon Him as His own. All the horror of unimaginable evil, with which our great cities are befouled; all the sights and sounds of abomination with which the earth has ever been defiled; all the hideous blasphemies against God that human tongues have uttered; all the deeds of oppression and crime that human hands have done; all the thoughts of selfishness and meanness that sordid hearts have conceived; all the plots of lying and injustice that scheming heads have planned—they were present to the eyes and ears, they were forced upon the heart and brain

of the Holy One who hated iniquity, and they were forced upon Him as though they were His own. Binding Him round with the clogging of their foulness, making Him feel Himself identified with them; with a horrible power to torture, although they had none to defile; they gathered round Him in avenging fury as though He had been guilty of them all. The recoil of the whole wickedness of the world descended upon His head in one stroke.

My friends, it is impossible that we should penetrate into the secrets of that agony of Redemption. But we know that in mystic identity He became one with us in the punishment of our sins. We know that He was in such wise the sin-bearer, that He is said to have been "made sin."

There is another great difference, my friends, between the story of the Cross and the history of all other human anguish,—that all the great ones of the earth who suffered and died for the Truth have passed, by the fact of their death, beyond the range of earthly sympathy. Their spirits, in patient expectancy, are awaiting the consummation of all things: their bodies are

resting in peace, in the keeping of the Saviour they loved. But for us they have passed for the present into the region of glorious memories. We can think of them, live like them, follow them. Across the interval of the centuries, we can pay them their meed of admiration. But to make them the compensation of our sympathy —that lies beyond our power. To our Lord Jesus Christ alone we can offer, after all these centuries, the reward of all that He endured:— "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied; by His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many—for He shall bear their iniquities."

In respect of both those sufferings, of which I spoke just now, it is possible for every one of us to render to our suffering Saviour the desired meed of His Passion;—by making the world less unworthy of the standard by which He lived;—by bringing our individual sins to be washed in the Blood which He shed.

You, too, if you will travel in His steps, may be of those, of whom the world is not worthy. You may shake off your slavery to standards, against which your conscience protests. You

may shake yourself clear of the frivolities which those around call enjoyment; may rise above the pitiful self-seeking which passes for knowledge of the world; may share the noble ambitions which aim at higher things; may live as the great ones have lived, in devotion to what you know to be ideal; may come to be a lover of the truth, and, in the truth, a lover of Jesus; may strive in little ways to live as He lived in the world. And the approving smile of your Saviour will rest upon you as you do so. For He is not as those other mighty dead, who have passed from the knowledge of the world. He lives: and all devotion to goodness is personal homage to Himself. The smile of the thorn-crowned Face, the benediction of the nail-pierced Hand, will rest upon the humblest imitator who is striving to walk in His steps.

But before you can pay Him this tribute of acknowledging the fruitfulness of His example, and devoting yourself to the truth for which He died, there is one more offering which He looks for, to show Him of the travail of His soul.

Let not that agony be barren in which He bore your sins. Among the sins which bowed

Him to the earth in the terrible struggle of Gethsemane, among those which crowded around Him in the noonday darkness of the Cross, the sins which lie on your conscience were plainly discerned by the Redeemer. For those did He agonise and die, as though, instead of a world of sinners, there had been none other but yourself. And now He pleads for the reward which by that agony He purchased. That reward is the salvation of your soul. "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." The reward which the Saviour asks of you, is the right to make you His own. He does but ask you to lay down the burden which He bore in your stead. Heavy-laden you assuredly are, even if the burden has never yet made you weary. And He pleads with you that, now He has borne it, you should not be crushed by it yourself. For one day, be assured, it will crush you, if you do not lay it upon Him. Bring, then, the burden of sin, and lay it upon the Saviour Who died for you. If once you have felt the burden, you will have no difficulty in believing in the Atonement. Ask no questions as to how it could be that one could die for all. Think only that you are a

sinner; and He, the Bearer of sin. Pour out the sad story before Him—if need be before His earthly representative. And then wait humbly for the words, which He died that He might be able to pronounce—

"Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace."

HOPE IN GOD, THE MESSAGE OF EASTER.

"Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves."—EZEKIEL XXXVII, 12.

When the vision of the Mystic Valley was ended, it was impressed on the Prophet, by the Almighty, that its true meaning was in no wise to be mistaken. He had seen before him the bones of the slain warriors who had helped by the prowess of their lifetime to make Judah respected among the nations. In the depression of the lengthened captivity, his eyes had been cheered for a moment by the sight of the resuscitation into life of those whose last struggle for their country had but ended in disaster and death. The bones lay bleached and bare in the open valley, very dry with the times which had passed over them since vulture and kite had done

Bombay Cathedral, Easter Day, 1886.

their work. And at the voice of the prophecy that was uttered, there had been a shaking, and the bones had come together, and flesh and skin had come to clothe them at his word. And then, when he had prophesied to the four winds, the breath had come into them and they had lived. For a moment they had stood up upon their feet, "an exceeding great army." Her old warriors had been ready, as it seemed, to make Jerusalem again a power among the nations. And then the wondrous vision had ended, and the depressing reality had returned. He was a captive in the land of the enemy, and there were no warriors restored from the past to undo what disaster had wrought.

But even in the moment of depression, the true meaning of the vision is unfolded.

It is by no resuscitation of a dead past that the great promise of Jehovah is to be fulfilled. Restoration was assuredly to take place. The Lord had not cast off His people, in spite of all their abuse of past privileges. But it is by trusting to Him for their future, not by dwelling on the vanished glories of their past, that they are to look for the deliverance which is in store.

"Son of man," he is told, in his disappointment, "these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold they say our bones are dried up and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off. Therefore, prophesy unto them and say thus unto them, thus saith the LORD GOD: behold I will open your graves, and will cause you to come up out of your graves, O my people, and I will bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, and caused you to come up out of your graves, O my people. And will put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land: and ye shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it, saith the LORD."

I will open *your* graves, and cause *you* to come up out of your graves. It is you, He says, you in your depression, you to whom the revival of hope seems to have become something out of the question—it is you for whom the new life is ready, the life of restoration from captivity.

The single lesson to be conveyed by the great vision was that the future lies with those who can hope in GOD. He who gave to the great

warriors of the past the prowess which had wrought deliverance for His people. He who could revive them out of their graves, to fight again, were He dependent on the aid of any man—it lies with Him to make the future triumphant for those who can rely upon His promise.

For the Church and for individual Christians, the same lesson is to be read on Easter Day, by the sepulchre from which Jesus has arisen.

On the Festival of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we stand beside no valley of a passing vision: we are thinking of no mere resuscitation to the ordinary conditions of human life. It is a fact, not a vision, that we have to deal with, and the rising again to life on which we meditate is the inauguration of a new order of being, to which no parallel had been known in the past.

"CHRIST being raised from the dead dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over Him: for in that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto GOD." A life imperishable, supernatural, a life which in its glorified condition has become the channel of supernatural vitality to all who will unite

themselves to it—it is this that we commemorate to-day, as we say, ALLELUIA! the LORD is risen.

If a vision which was no more than a mere vision—of a resuscitation to ordinary human life—was sufficient to impress on a whole nation, that its future could be safely left with Almighty GOD, then surely the Rising again, which is a reality, the inauguration of a Life which is supernatural may give a like confidence to the Body of CHRIST and to all who are privileged to be Its members.

If it should prove that for the Church as a whole there can be no revival of her days of political greatness; nay, if the struggle which lies before her in the future be not for establishment or endowment, but for bare life amidst the break up of civilization before the forces of anarchy and revolution, yet let her remember, by the vacated Sepulchre, that the Presence of the Master Who has arisen is promised her to the end of the world. If her trust be reposed upon Him, not on any mere revival of past privileges, then to her no break up of the social fabric could bring anything of which she has not been

forewarned, could cast a doubt on the great promises of her Founder. He said of the last days of the present age that they should bring troubles, to which the past can give no parallel. Yet He promised that, to the consummation of all things, the gates of hell should not prevail against His Church.

To those who can commit themselves to GOD for the future of their individual lives, the same lesson is brought home by Easter Day.

There are those to whom the possibility of higher things seems to be cut off by the deadening influence of an evil past. Speak to them of moral advance, and they will tell you that this, for themselves, has long been one of the things that might have been. They think of innocence, that great first opportunity which so few have truly valued till it was parted with, of freshness which has now become *blasé*, of days when the springs of moral energy were unexhausted by fruitless resolutions, and they tell you, "Our hope is gone: we are clean cut off for our part."

Were I speaking to you from any other platform than that of the Resurrection of Jesus

Christ, it might be possible to admit that for such cases the springs of hope were really dried up. Were it only the renewal of moral life as it is possible to unassisted humanity, which constituted the message of the Gospel, then I allow that by carelessness and sin, the expectation of such renewal might have been made futile. But it is life from the dead that we proclaim to you. It is no mere resuscitation of dead effort, no restoration of that which has been forfeited. Let the dead past bury its dead, but come thou and believe the Gospel.

When the Saviour arose from the dead and ascended to the Majesty on high, He made Himself a new well-spring of life for those from whom all hope had passed away. You are jaded, you say, with the world: you have left behind you the power of new exertion: if that could be revived as before, there might be hope for you in the end.

But the message which I bring to you to-day is: "I will open *your* grave, and cause *you* to come up out of your grave." A new life, even the life of Jesus Christ, of one present in you by the power of the Holy Ghost—it is that, no revival

of an old life, which lies open to you if you will but have hope.

And even in lives which are being lived in Jesus Christ, there come periods of check and depression. It may be when the first exuberance of youth is wearing off from the physical frame, or it may be when the first joy of forgiveness is melting into the light of common day. It may be when GOD is trying the soul by the discipline of making it live for Himself alone, with no support such as He gives to beginners from the conscious realization of His nearness to it. But whatever may be the reason in each case, it happens often to faithful followers of Jesus Christ, that they are tempted to look back with fond longing, to a past which seems far brighter than their present. They seem to stand by some valley of vision, where the bones of dead hopes and lost ideals are bleaching in hopeless desolation.

Could these but revive in the future, then they think there might be hope of future victories. But it is plain, they say, that these have been lived through. While they lasted, they made life bright with hopefulness, but now the

springs of enthusiasm are dried up, and things can never again be as they have been. The very eagerness with which the battle was first engaged in has worn out the gallant forces with which they started. They did not realise that the call for exertion would be so continuous or so wearying as it has been. And so one warrior has been surrounded and slain as he was pressing onward too eagerly in pursuit, and another has sunk, worn out, for want of prudence in husbanding his strength: and where are now the glorious hopes and resolutions with which other Eastertides were ushered in? the exuberant youthful ideals of noble and disinterested service? the resolutions for which nothing seemed too arduous, so boundless were the possibilities which lay before us? Slain, slain in the valley of vision, and it is hopeless to think of their reviving.

And there are those to whom the thought of the past brings associations which seem to lend themselves yet more readily to the figure of the bones in the valley. It is their social and domestic life which has been ravaged and led into captivity.

With a brave array of domestic joys, they started at the beginning of the campaign, surrounded by the love of home and friends, which made life populous with pleasures, and vocal with the music of sweet intercourse. The country of their life lay unravaged, with its smiling, cultivated slopes upturned to the sun of spring.

And now as they look back to what was then, they are tempted to say that hope is gone, that what remains of their early anticipations does but mock them with the ghastliness of the alteration.

For all who are tempted to lose hope, whether the disasters which have ravaged their lives have befallen them without or within, the voice comes from the open grave in the garden:—"Why seek ye the living among the dead?"

Be it granted to the full, of your past losses, that resuscitation is impossible in this world. Still the word which comes to you from the Lord does not tell of mere revival, but of resurrection:—"I will open *your* grave," He says to you, "and will bring you up out of your graves." It is a message of hope for this world, since it tells of union with the risen life of Jesus

Christ. It is a message of assurance for the next world; since that life in the Lord Jesus is unending.

To the soul which is united to Him there may come checks; there may come moments in life's struggle when it seems as though old motives were failing; as though apathy or back-sliding were inevitable. But the spring of life which comes from Him is inexhaustible. He is no mere man, that His resources should be exhausted, or that He should stop short in the working out of His great purposes. And you, if you are holding on to the Saviour, are not left to mere human resources, to win or lose, as it may chance, in the great warfare. If He Who is alive from the dead be within you as a source of risen life, new powers will develop in you continually to meet the new demands which are made on you. And if, to the very end of your life, the old sense of inadequacy should remain, if the last years of the struggle should seem less triumphant, if the dust and the soil of the conflict should dim what were once such brave accoutrements, still so long as your face is to the enemy, so long it is the Saviour who supports you.

Resurrection life is in you; the powers of death shall not prevail against that.

Even to those who are to mourn to the end over a home from which the light has departed, Easter Day has its message of restoration. It may be that on this side the grave, even union with Him Who is the life, may not mean the restoration of enjoyment, the illumination of the path by which you walk. But even here the love of the Saviour can more than compensate for the loss of other loves, if not in earthly enjoyment, yet in its power to fill and satisfy the affections. And the news of new life from the dead tells of a world where broken ties may be knit up, if in this world they have been formed in the Lord. If your dead could be restored to you here, it were but on the old condition of one day parting. It is with no such condition attached that the restoration is promised you to-day, but in a life as imperishable as the life with which Jesus now lives on the throne of heaven.

Of spiritual life, then, in this world, of spiritual and of social life as well in the world where all things are made new, the Easter message

may come home to all alike who are mourning to-day over buried hopes:—"I will open your graves, and will bring you up out of your graves: and I will put My Spirit within you and ye shall live."

THE RESURRECTION, THE ANSWER TO PESSIMISM.

There be many that say, who will show us any good.—*Psalm*, iv. 6. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.—I *Peter*, i. 3.

THE writer of these last words of glowing hope believed that he had found an answer to the question, Who will show us any good? For he believed that on the first Easter morning, the prayer of the Psalmist had been answered:—Lord lift Thou up the light of Thy Countenance upon us. He believed that for all vague aspirations, in which men had stretched forth after a highest Good, a satisfaction had been found once for all in the new Life which the Master had inaugurated, and which His followers were called upon to live:—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." A hope, and the foundation of that hope, nay, a certainty and the assurance of that certainty—these he found in the

Cathedral, Easter Day, 1890

one central fact which was the basis of his life and of his teaching, the Rising of His Master from the grave.

A hope, and a foundation for that hope, a certainty, and a basis for that certainty—they are the foundation of all noble living, of all earnestness, and of all joyousness in daily work.

Let me speak first of some practical results which we see displayed everywhere around us by the absence of these from many minds. A melancholy, profound and all-pervading, is the endemic disease of modern life—a melancholy which, for those who can read it, presents itself in many, many forms, often not recognising itself for what it is, but very often expressing itself directly in various degrees of articulateness.

The first expression of it to which I would direct you is to be found in what is most characteristic in the literature of more than one country.

The name of Schoppenhauer is familiar to some among you, as the founder of the German school of Pessimism. But those who are unfamiliar with his influence will be startled, I think, when they are told that his teaching might be summarized as follows:—Life is nothing, holds nothing,

offers nothing which can render it preferable to annihilation : nay, annihilation is so preferable to existence, that if only we had the courage of our beliefs, we should end life and misery together by resorting universally to self-destruction. Perhaps this seems mere raving to most of you ; hardly serious, at any rate unintelligible. It is grim earnest, I assure you, to many.

But I pass to another manifestation, better known, alas ! and more intelligible. You all know the outside at least of certain books which lie piled upon the counters in every bookseller's shop that we go into—the books which have been branded for all time by the manly contempt of our own Browning, under the title of the *Scrofulous French Novel.** Are those, you ask, the outcome of melancholy? Yes; what Schop-

* I have been asked whether I lumped M. Zola with those writers who make vice attractive by pourtraying it sympathetically and making it attractive.

It is doubtless one thing to pourtray it sympathetically, and another to display it in the realistic detail of M. Zola's novels. But there remains the fact, all the same. Still, apart from the fact that there are certain types of vice so attractive to fallen humanity that to display them in detail at all is to spread a net for unwary feet.

But my quarrel with M. Zola in this sermon is not so much that he makes vice attractive—he often makes it unspeakably hideous—but that he does his utmost to deter people from virtue by representing vice as inevitable.

penhauer is to Berlin, that M. Zola is to Paris. Each has dressed out the wares he had to sell in the garb which would attract his own public—the Parisian, with more immediate success, for Schopenhauer died little known—still each has won the ear of the public in the nation for which he wrote. Do you know, then, what is the Creed of which M. Zola and his followers are exponents?

Let me give it you summed up in one sentence: Brute thou art, and brute thou shalt be; brute in nature, brute in action, brute in death and in the nothingness that comes after: be disillusionised, poor fool, once for all, of belief in any higher possibilities: there is nothing to be in earnest about: eat and drink, for to-morrow you die.

You had thought that certain poets in England and the realistic novelists in France did but give utterance, shameless and undisguised, to the fierce sensuality that was in them. I tell you that they write with a purpose, to disabuse you of your belief in better things. Or if some of them do not write with a purpose, then they do but express the more perfectly, because they express *naïvely* and inevitably, the lesson of hopeless melancholy which Matthew Arnold, with his

exquisite self-pity, has set forth for higher minds.

I might multiply instances at will, but these are enough for my present purpose.

Passing by the same feature in modern Art, let me go on to the social manifestations of the same prevailing melancholy.

Society was invited, the other day, to relieve its sense of *ennui* by giving answers in a certain London newspaper to that question of all questions for every age—What constitutes your notion of happiness? The answers were none the less interesting for being, in many cases, unutterably distressing. Indeed, the spirit in which the question was asked scarcely needed the misery of the answers to accentuate the gulf of depression which it indicated as yawning in the midst of us. The question resolved itself into this:—Is there anything that we believe with such certainty that it is worth while to be in earnest about it? Is it better to cherish our delusions after we have begun to suspect that they delude us? We spend our earlier years in learning that we have not the experience essential for living aright: shall we be open-eyed during the years that remain, and ac-

knowledge that we have learnt how to enjoy, after our capacities for enjoying have died out?

Some of the answers, I think, came to this :— It is bad to be deluded, perhaps, but it is worse to awake to your delusions; get done with life, then, betimes, before you know too much for your own happiness.

Others, again, jibed bitterly at the question, as though to say, enjoyment is real; nothing else is worth questioning about—if, indeed, there be anything else.

But we do not commit suicide, you will say; neither do we, most of us at least, read the worst realistic novels; nor do we ask questions in newspapers, begotten of spleen and despair. What have we to do with this melancholy? It is not all unsophisticated joyousness which dances through season after season, desperately in earnest in killing time, and only playing, now and again, at being serious. There is a melancholy which soothes itself with solitude; but there is a melancholy, not less profound, which dreads nothing so much as being alone—a melancholy to which thought is intolerable, whose one dread is to know itself for what it is. This

is one manifestation among us, of what I have called the endemic of modern life.

Another is flippancy, or affected flippancy, when serious things are alluded to. Solemn thoughts have, perhaps, slipped, as it were unbidden, into a room where their company is unusual. And instantly every one is in a bustle, how best and quickest to get them out again. Out they must go, somehow,—that is certain—but good breeding will not show them the door with a direct request that they will retire. It is —here, somebody help us, please, quickly. Then a jest comes forward to the rescue—a mock-solemn bow, and they are off. But, the flutter, the uneasiness, the jest meant melancholy only half disguised, not quite deceiving even ourselves; meant, would God, at the bottom of my heart, that I did hold something worth living for; meant want of joyousness, which comes from want of earnestness, want of earnestness, which comes from want of faith. In a word, the melancholy of modern life means the exact, and often conscious, contradictory of that which S. Peter enunciates.

The Resurrection as the basis of certainty,

certainty as the basis of earnestness, earnestness as the secret of joy—there you have the Gospel message of S. Peter. Doubt of all things making earnestness impossible, lack of earnestness making joyousness impossible, lack of joy breaking out in diverse forms, as brooding, or a sensuality, or as flippancy, or as despair—there you have the exact contradictory displaying itself with its necessary consequences.

Let us dwell, then, on the message of Easter as the remedy for the melancholy of modern life.

The key-note of life and work to every Christian is that certainty about "the destiny of the creature" which the Rising from the dead sets before him. That element of personal hopefulness which has been converted by some modern writers into a reproach against the Gospel, is undoubtedly a first principle of its whole system. It offers no ideal to our acceptance which does not carry with it, of necessity, that ultimate perfection of our being, for which we instinctively crave. It does not teach us to look for our own happiness as an object to be sought for its own sake, in preference to, or even independently of, our duties to God and to our neighbour.

But it does teach us that the two are inseparable, that in adequately pleasing God and helping man we necessarily secure our own perfection—a perfection in which personal enjoyment is included as a matter of course. When humanity, unsatisfied and querulous asks, "Who will show us any good?" Christianity points to the open Tomb, and replies, as the Psalmist replied, in words not of teaching but of prayer:—"Lord lift Thou up the light of Thy Countenance upon us." She indicates the certainty that we long for, beaming on us from the Face of the Risen Lord. There, she tells us, is the pledge and the foretaste of all that human nature can desire, a life in which submission and self-sacrifice have culminated in the absolute blessedness; where perfect love to God and love to man have ceased to entail pain or sacrifice; where impulse and the will that controls it are no longer at war between themselves; where the soul, set free from lower cravings, is absolute master of itself, crowned, as Dante was crowned after Purgatory, king and priest, in Christ, over himself, so that himself should, in the life which lay beyond, be sufficient, in Christ, to himself, for spontaneous,

untramelled enjoyment. Yes, the certainty of a higher life beyond, set forth before our eyes in the Risen Jesus—this certainty is the basis of the Gospel with its message of earnestness and of joyance.

For, indeed, here is something worthy of our endeavours, something to rescue human life once for all, from that sense of inadequacy to itself which is the source of all brooding and melancholy. Life, we plain, is inadequate to its own demands; it mocks us with unrealized ideals, and deludes us with impossible anticipations. Very true—of the life of this world viewed apart form all hope in a hereafter. "If in this life only we have hope" (even although that hope be) "in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But—now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." Now we know of another life beyond, where no anticipation is unfulfilled, no ideal eludes the pursuit, no experience of what has been alluring leaves the heart disillusionised and empty. It is worth while to make life earnest, beloved friends, if this be its ultimate goal. And no life of sustained, quiet earnestness has time or inclination for brooding.

But we find in the Life of Jesus Risen no mere promise of blessedness hereafter. Such a promise were insufficient by itself; though it contained both a pledge of enjoyment, and the assurance that the enjoyment which it promises were the fulfilment of our noblest ideals.

A model, and a support for toilsome effort are needful to present, actual probation; as a pledge of effortless perfection is needful to future, promised attainment.

And the model and the support in toiling after it are alike contained in the Risen Life. That Life makes earnestness worthwhile, not simply by setting before it a future worthy of attainment, but by enduing it, here and now, with the pledge, and the principle of success. In Christ, to be conformed to Christ; sustained by the Grace of His living presence, to be assimilated by degrees to His Example; "born again of incorruptible seed;" reborn from the ashes of our lower being; reconstituted in Him as a new creation, we are enstated in a present possession; which is none the less real to us now for being the scene of that struggle in the flesh which leads on to perfection in the spirit.

Nay, in this does that earnestness consist, which I have spoken of as the antidote to melancholy—in attaining, through the strength of Christ risen, to a life of risen holiness in Him, by daily effort to overcome the lower nature. That which Schoppenhauer made the basis of his pessimism, the unceasing necessity for effort, is to the Christian who exerts himself in Christ, the very antidote to pessimistic misgivings. To exert himself in copying His Master, for the sake of being pleasing to his Master, in dependence on the Grace of his Master—this is life, this is happiness to the disciple. Be disillusionised, he is bidden, once for all, of the nightmare of bondage to the flesh: Christ's thou art, and Christ's thou shalt be; Christ's in nature, Christ's in life, Christ's in death, in Resurrection from the dead and in the perfection that is to follow. And, indeed, though effort never ceases in this world, yet even here, in the life of the spirit, there may be found something of the inevitableness and the *naivetés*, of which I spoke as testifying so powerfully to the melancholy which issues in fleshly living. The new principle of life in Christ Jesus can work its way into the

fibre of our being; till it manifest itself, to a very great degree, in spontaneous, effortless well-doing. For Christ once assimilated into the life will make Himself felt in all its pulses. It is the *inevitable* element in every life which displays it in its most essential characteristics: I mean that in our least guarded moments, when we are but giving effect, half unconsciously, to what constitutes our habitual temper, then it is that a keen-eyed observer will read us most surely as we are. And a character which has Christ as its ruling principle will reproduce the very temper of Christ in these unguarded, half unconscious acts; it will, it must reproduce Christ, just because it has assimilated Christ. The tree will be known by its fruits, as a branch drawing nourishment from the vine.

Hence the joyousness of high Christian living, the inevitable, spontaneous resultant of ordered and successful endeavour when crowned with the consummation of success. Enjoyment is suffused over such effort, as the bloom is suffused over the fruit.

Read the answer, then, to pessimism and melancholy, written large on the life of the

humble Christian. He is joyous, because effort in Christ is issuing in the joyance of success: he is successful, because the model set before Him is being attained by earnest endeavour: he is earnest, because all his endeavours are carried through in the strength of a great certainty—the certainty of the Life beyond the grave, where effort is all one with attainment: he is certain of the life beyond the grave, because in Christ its first-fruits have been gathered—because "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him."

Make your choice, then—we all have to make it—between the alternatives which I have tried to set before you;—certainty or doubt, earnestness or indifference, joyousness or melancholy; the joyousness of rising in the spirit, or the melancholy of sinking in the flesh, the earnestness of christian endeavour or the listlessness of pagan incapacity; the certainty of life and immortality brought to life in the Gospel of Christ, or the doubtfulness of the peevish question, "who will show us any good?"

THE ESSENTIAL AGGRESSIVENESS OF THE GOSPEL.

"Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel. *I. Cor.* IX. 16.

In the early days of the Church's existence, when to be a Christian was a crime against the state, Christian martyrs used to be asked, in utter wonderment, why they could not revere their own Master without casting off allegiance to other deities:—why not worship the Emperor and the Roman Gods, though you do esteem Christ above them all? Why expose yourselves to outrage and martyrdom, when all that is asked of you by the law is to offer a few grains of incense in honour of the religion of the Empire? Such questions were constantly put to them, and they were accused of unreasoning obstinacy, of courting destruction unnecessarily, because they said, and acted out what they said, that to be a Christian and to make terms with other creeds was not to be a Christian at all.

It was this inability to make terms with other faiths, or rather I should say with other worships, which accounts for the persecution of

Bombay Cathedral, Whitsun Day, 1890.

Christianity by the Emperors of the Roman world.* A religion which claimed to be universal —nay, which was more than universal, which was aggressive—must assert itself necessarily, it was felt, against the other universal dominion which was claimed for the Empire and its rulers. Had Christianity been a national religion, content to leave each nation of the world to the worship of its national gods, it might have secured the protection of the Empire, instead of being persecuted by it.

We know the choice which was made by the Church in those days of her obloquy and persecution—how to make terms with the religions of the world meant to be exiled from the household of faith—how to be martyred rather than sacrifice was to earn a place on the bederoll of her saints—how to throw that grain of incense upon the altar was to live on excommunicated and degraded.

The applications of a principal like this may vary to an indefinite degree with the varying circumstances of Christian people. Our Church in

* Bishop Wescott's Epistles of S. John, Essay I. on "The Two Empires."

Eastern Africa in our own day has had its martyrs who have been slowly burnt alive, refusing to deny Him who bought them; while in India she is the Church of the ruling race, exacting, and receiving respect from those who are aliens from her faith. But in each case the principle remains the same: exclusive and aggressive, admitting no other religion to have a claim on the allegiance of men's consciences, using all means which are compatible with her own charity to bring aliens into the fold of the Gospel, Christianity cannot swerve from her old position; whether the consequences of adopting that position be martyrdom, when she is weak in worldy strength, or the peaceful presentation of the Gospel, when she is raised above the reach of persecution, and reigns as the faith of the conqueror.

Let me bring before you those characteristics of Christianity which account for this aggressiveness—this intolerance, if any one chooses so to call it so—which has been cast in her teeth as a reproach from the days of the Antonines till to-day.

For as obstinacy, for the sake of mere obstinacy, was cast in the teeth of the martyrs, when they

went to death rather than sacrifice to Cæsar, so the insolence of mere bigoted aggressiveness is cast in our teeth at this day, when we seek to make disciples of all the world, in accordance with our Saviour's command.

Why sacrifice your life to your exclusiveness? was the question with which the martyrs were plied. Because I am a Christian, was their reply, and very often they refused to say more.

Why not leave people to the religion of their fathers? why suppose that no one can be right who believes anything different from yourselves? why force an exotic religion upon those who are content with their own?—such are the questions which are asked of the Missionary in the India of the present day. And the answer has to be just the same; though we make it in comfort and peace, while they made it in suffering and death—just because I am a Christian, we must say.

To those who fully apprehend the situation, who take in what it means to be a Christian, and all that being a Christian carries with it, this answer alone would be sufficient. But I propose to draw it out in greater detail. We are often

called upon to answer to the world for this aggressiveness of the faith which we believe. And even for ourselves it is no bad thing to enforce by all means at our command a characteristic of our holy religion which we are a great deal too apt to lose sight of.

The aggressiveness, then, of the Christian religion is due to its being, before all things, the religion of a Personal Redeemer, of One Who proclaimed Himself, and Who is, the very centre of the religion which He founded.

Instead of laying down a way of righteousness, and undertaking but to point us to that way, and to indicate its approach to Almighty God, He professes in some mysterious manner to be Himself our approach to God:—"I am the Way."

Instead of proclaiming, as other teachers have done, that truth in the abstract was everything, and that His personal proclamation of it was but secondary, He puts Himself, His Own Person, before us as being Himself the truth which He announces:—"I am the Truth."

Instead of propounding a life to be lived, He offers Himself as the principle of life, offers to

live our life in us, nay to be Himself our Life:—"I am the Life," He said:—"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."

It is this feature of Christianity, before all others—nay I should not say this feature of Christianity, for it is no single, isolated feature, but is the core, the very essence of the Gospel—which makes it always, in all ages and in all countries, a proselytising system of aggression upon all other faiths and other worships. Not to be this is to be false to its Essence, to have sunk from its original high estate as the proclamation of the "One God, and the One Mediator between God and man," to have admitted that there are "other names under Heaven, given among men whereby we may be saved"—in a word, to have ceased to be Christianity.

We may have learnt with the expansiveness of modern times to recognise more fully than our fathers, what S. Paul recognised from the first, that human systems of natural religion have in them an element of the Divine. Closer acquaintance with the sacred books of the East may have brought out how the conscience of

mankind, even apart from any actual revelation, could "feel after God" and partly "find Him." We may have learnt how the elements of morality are so essentially engrained in the conscience, that amid all possible varieties in detail, the sense of right and wrong is never absent, except when people sin it away. All this Christianity can acknowledge, and yet, no less, when she has assimilated it all, she announces herself, or her Master, as furnishing the unique, the single channel, by which God can be fully attained to.

And the reason of that exclusiveness is this—that it is only as members of Christ, taken up into His mystical Body, participators in His work for human kind, that we are made, severally, partakers of Divine Nature.

And as the origin of the righteousness which she proclaims is thus essentially personal and one; so the mode of its application to man is, in the purview of the Gospel, as unique. As there is but One Saviour Who wrought it out, and from Whom, as from a fountain of Holiness, it can be applied to individual sinners, so the Person Who applies it is One, the Holy Spirit who descended at Pentecost to unite the redeemed to the Redeemer.

One God and Father, One Saviour and Mediator, One Spirit and Sanctifier—so runs, and ever must run the proclamation of the everlasting Gospel; incapable of accommodation or of alteration; precluded by the terms of its proclamation from making terms with any system or any worship, of which Christ is not the essence, as the Mediator between sinners and the All-Holy, of which the Spirit is not the active principle, as bringing Christ to individual souls.

Get this once established on a firm basis, the Gospel as the religion of Mediation, of union between the Creator and His creatures, union purchased by the Sacrifice of the Cross and applied by the dispensation of the Spirit—get this, I say established once for all, and the Gospel can be unboundedly generous in admitting the claims of other systems to have struck out with a marvellous intuition the main lines of the ideal of righteousness. For she stands alone in her own unique pretensions to have bridged the gulf between Infinite and finite, to have reconciled the unapproachable Holiness and the sinner all laden with his sin.

But having admitted these claims to the full, having read in other books and other systems the delineation of the ideals of mankind, nay the outlines of the features of God Himself, she proclaims frankly to the followers of these systems that what they dimly toil to attain, she offers for actual acceptance; that the visions of possibility which are theirs represent actual realities in herself; that the way which they are striving to walk in, the truth which they are groping to find, the life which they discern as attainable—all these our Saviour is to each soul that is united to Him by the Holy Spirit.

It is the possession of a charter like this which gives to the faith of the Gospel that character of aggressiveness which I have claimed for it; which not only entitles it to be aggressive, to be the missionary faith of the world, but which lays the duty of proselytising upon it, so that it is false to the first essentials of its own system if it cease to be aggressive for an instant.

"Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel," said its most enthusiastic propagator about himself. He spoke of himself as preaching it "unwillingly," as "constrained" by the love of

Christ to proclaim it to the adherents of other systems. So completely was he permeated by the persuasion that to be aggressive was of the essence of the Gospel, that life had no meaning to him, no attractiveness, save in as far as it was one long opportunity of forcing Christ upon the notice of all men.

We are less enthusiastic at the present day. Leave them alone, we are inclined to say; is it not kinder to let them be undisturbed? nay, is it good taste to stigmatise as inadequate what they have inherited from their forefathers? is it not inconsistent to be forward and aggressive, when our own lives need so much amending?

And here, at last, we reach the heart of the difficulty—while our own lives need so much amending!—yes, there is what really quenches our aggressiveness; that to us, the professors of Christianity, it does not mean more than it often does; that the forgiveness which was purchased upon the Cross is not something to be passionately sought, as a personal reconciliation to alter our whole footing with God; that the holiness placed freely within our reach is not something craved after as daily nourishment, struggled after with

the passionate pursuit which men urge after inevitable ideals.

The objects which haunt a man like a passion are those which he impresses upon other people. The ideals which he pursues like a lover, which crowd on his waking thoughts in the morning, which sting him on to exertion in the day-time, which follow him up in his dreams in the night—those are what he can enforce on other minds, nay, what he cannot but enforce if he tries. But the things which take no masterful hold upon us, which do not hale us about whither they will; the ideas which bring no tremble into our voice, the objects which do not shake us with uneasiness until we know that they are on the road to be effected; the pursuits to which we look back through steady pulses; the passions which leave us masters of ourselves, of which we never felt that they wielded us, instead of our being masters over them—all these leave the world as they find it, because they have never greatly cared to make it different.

If our Christianity fall under such a category, then no wonder that it is not aggressive, does not acknowledge the necessity for aggression. But

then it was not a Christianity like this which took its votaries to the lions or to the stake. It was not a Christianity like this that braved the Empire through ten persecutions, and then rose as the Imperial Religion on the fall of the heathendom which had persecuted it. And, again, for the two things are inseparable, it was not a Christianity like this which survived the fall of the Empire, and went forth to subjugate the barbarians after the Empire had crumbled under their inroads.

For the true relation of the Gospel to the world is essentially one and indivisible: calm to bear, it is strong to assault: the patience and the aggressiveness of the saints are but two aspects of a single stedfast bearing, maintained in all circumstances alike.

I am a Christian and Christ is my all—set the man who thus sums up his life face to face with any other religion, and the attitude of uncompromising antagonism is the only one possible to him. Let pagandom be insolent and strong, let it be armed for earthly aggression, and Christ's servant, who owes all to his Lord, will face it as the martyr, unflinching: it may crush him, but he

regards that possibility as, in fact, no concern of his: he leaves that issue in the hands of his Master. "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter," must be his attitude as it was that of the three confessors when they stood at the mouth of the fiery furnace. But if heathendom will leave him alone, he cannot leave heathendom alone: he must assault it with the weapons of Pentecost; must bring the power of the Holy Ghost to bear upon it.

I ask you, then, ere I close, this Whitsunday, if you are indifferent to the heathenism around us, look within for the only explanation of an attitude so totally unchristian, so opposed to the first principles of the Gospel. Do not waste time in looking elsewhere for explanations. For even that most excusable of explanations, the unsatisfactoriness of converts whom we have known, has really this as its counter-explanation, that we have brought them into a system of Christianity which is so defective on the score of enthusiasm, that its new votaries have missed the first of helps, the depth of fellowship which should characterise Christians. The Gospel did not come to them at first with the fulness of

Pentecostal enthusiasm. They did not see it in the plenitude of its power, swaying men, swaying bodies of men, as the rushing mighty wind of the first coming swayed the Church of the days of the Apostles.

Even then there were scandals and defections. Even then many left their first love. But still, the Gospel was presented as an inspiration, as an enthusiasm that took men out of themselves.

When we make it what it was to St. Paul, "a power of God unto salvation" to transform, to transfigure, to renew us into the image of Him Who created us; when it burns as a fire in our bones, with, "woe is me if I preach not the Gospel," then the converts that it makes will not discredit it: then preachers, when they plead the cause of missions will not be driven into that attitude of apology which we find so inevitable now, but which—I can answer for one preacher—makes one feel a deadly shame for one's own position, impossible though it be to escape from it.

God forgive us one and all in this matter; for "we are verily guilty concerning our brother."

THE DEPENDENCE OF "A RIGHT JUDGMENT" UPON THE "HOLY COMFORT" OF GOD'S SPIRIT.

We are taught to ask in the Collect for Whitsunday, that Almighty GOD, by the Spirit of Pentecost, will "make us to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in His holy comfort"—in the comfort, that is, of the same Spirit.

And I must confess that, thinking over this Collect, it has often appeared to me in times past that the first and the principal of these petitions was somewhat inadequate, even cold, to be given us for the central prayer of God's children on the Day which put the crown and the master-touch to the whole work which Christ wrought for His Own.

"A right judgment in all things," I have often thought—yes a blessed, a most necessary gift; but one which belonged, as it seemed, fully more to the head than to the heart fully more to the natural equipment, with which a Christian might

Bombay Cathedral, Whitsunday, 1891.

hope to be endowed, than to the fulness of supernatural graces which we associate with the outpouring of the Spirit.

I view the matter very differently now, but I have thought that on this Whitsunday, it might possibly be helpful to some brother, if I tried to draw out, with a brief analysis, how it is that the ripeness of Christian judgment belongs more to the heart than to the head; how intimately connected it is with the tenderest and rarest of graces; and especially how close is its connection with that other most winning Christian virtue which we pray for to-day in the same breath with it, the grace of rejoicing in the holy comfort which comes by the manifestation of God's Spirit.

For, indeed, the connection of the two is very far from being arbitrary or unmeaning: we pray for judgment and for rejoicing in one sentence—the rejoicing which comes of God's comfort—because apart from rejoicing in the Lord, the riper judgment which dowers the advancing Christian can never be developed as it ought.

God's great gift, then, of sanctified common sense; the part it plays in the life of every

Christian; how eminently worthy it is to be prayed for as the central petition of a Day so supreme as that of Pentecost; and, most especially, how close is its connection with the gift of rejoicing in the Holy Spirit;—if I can help you to any fresh appreciation, how these are brought before us by the Church, it will certainly not be for nothing that we shall have joined once again in the great Collect, which asks on the crowning day of Christ's work, that we may be made "to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in the holy comfort" which is so specially the gift of His Spirit.

And first, of the part played by sound judgment in the life of the Christian of to-day. There have been epochs in man's spiritual history, both within the Church and without, when people have thought that their every-day actions should be guided by referring every detail to the dictates of an inward voice, or to the rays of an interior light, which spake, or which shone in their hearts directly from the Spirit Himself.

You cannot study the Acts of the Apostles without discerning how at least in the first days, the resolving of difficult questions affecting the

ordering of life and work was referred by the pioneers of the Gospel to a direct intuition of God's will, an intuition imprinted on their hearts, by the Spirit instructing their own instincts to guide them in laying out their plans.

Two Apostles on a missionary journey were minded to go into Bithynia, and we are told that "the Spirit of Jesus did not suffer them," and they turned aside to another sphere of work. And so in many places in history, we find that the Church's course at a crisis was sometimes guided by a similar intuition; which was justified in the event by results, but which did not seem to be worked out at the time by any ordinary process of reasoning.

A certain mystical, unreasoned intuition has been adopted by good men, in many ages, as a sure indication to themselves of what God was marking out as their proper course.

Let me read to you as a specimen of this, an extract from an exquisite diary, in which a loving-hearted worker of the last century, quite outside the pale of the Church, records with the most artless quaintness the way in which he ordered his life—from the most perilous under-

takings of an ardent ministry in a country overrun by fierce savages, down to the details, too quaint to be read out, of his dress and his lodging from day to day.

He is writing of a missionary journey which he felt himself called to undertake at the imminent peril of his life, and this is how he says he was led up to it:—"At times I felt inward drawings towards a visit to that place, which I mentioned to none except my dear wife until it came to some ripeness. Now as this visit felt weighty, and was performed at a time when travelling appeared perilous, so the dispensations of Divine Providence in preparing my mind for it have been memorable, and I believe it good for me to give some account thereof. After I had given up," *i.e.*, resigned myself, "to go, the thoughts of the journey were often attended with unusual sadness; at which times my heart was frequently turned to the Lord, with inward breathings for His heavenly support, that I might not fail to follow Him wheresoever he might lead me."

We dare not say that a man was altogether wrong, who was swayed by convictions such as

these, when labouring on behalf of the same Master, in whose cause a Paul or a Barnabas was minded to go into Bithynia, but was not suffered to do so by the Spirit. But I have quoted the Journal of John Woolman, neither to criticise, nor to approve of the mysticism which furnished him with the guidance of his life, but simply in order to point a contrast between that and the methods which we use. I suppose that when we have to decide, say, whether a child is to go to Europe, or whether we are to undertake some piece of work, we are quite clear that Christian common sense, the weighing of the conditions *pro* and *con*, in the light of a desire to choose aright, and with prayer for "a right judgment in all things," is that which serves us as a compass, by which to steer our course. We never think of referring such decisions to the dictates of a mystical inner light, or of a voice speaking in us in solitude. Indeed, whatever we may think about John Woolman, we should regard it as little less than profane to speak of our own intuitions under the title of dictates of God's Spirit.

And yet, if our lives are to be rightly guided, if we are to rise to conformity to our own

standards, if duty and love are to be our motives, not subtly disguised inclination, then surely we must sometimes feel anxious, how far, in our practical decisions, we are really being guided by the Spirit into living in accordance with God's will. I confess to having envied now and then some loving, old-fashioned Christian soul, who went about the daily ordering of her life with something which approximated, at any rate, to that reference of all things to God's will by the light of an inner conviction.

And yet, I take it that a substitute for all that, in the shape of a true, loving judgment, which shall arrive, by the path of ordered reason, at an accurate apprehension of God's providence—I take it that something like this is what we ask for in the collect for to-day; that we ask to be purged of lower motives, and dowered with a sympathetic understanding, till heart and will and judgment and affections shall learn to move straight to one mark, the carrying out, in principle and in detail, of all that we can learn of best and highest. We ask for the disciplining of frivolous inclination, for the restraining of unchastened imagination, for the taming of re-

bellious desire, for the suppression of impatience and self-will; so that our characters may be mellowed and subdued into a ready intuition of what is best—

"Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain;"

till we conform ourselves, inevitably and instinctively to that which, by the dictates of sober reason, we learn to be God's will for ourselves and others.

Having got clear, then, what we mean by a right judgment; how paramount is the part that it has to play in the ordering of the life of every Christian; and how worthy it therefore is to be prayed for on a day so supreme as that of Pentecost; I would bring before you, as God may enable me, the intimate connection that it has with that other most gracious of God's gifts, the spirit of joy in the Holy Ghost, for which we pray in the same sentence of the Collect.

For perhaps no two Christian graces are more subtly dependent on one another than right judgment and joy in the Holy Ghost.

A joyless, comfortless spirit will always be warped in wrong directions. It must want that

directness of vision which ends by bringing impulse and inclination to lead straight into the path of God's commandments. And, again, constant failures in Christian wisdom, the consciousness of blundering and want of tact tends, in turn, to becloud the erring heart with doubts of God's watchfulness for its welfare.

The unrejoicing spirit of sourness tends away from the path where God would lead us; because the groundwork of its notion of God is not a child's instinct of its Father's heart. It thinks of God as a tyrannical taskmaster, looking out to catch His bondmen in some fault, ever ready to misunderstand, to deal out unsympathetic, harsh measures. It fails to apprehend what he would teach it; because it misses that sympathy with the Teacher, which forms the first condition of learning. It may take up Christ's yoke in a certain way, but it does not learn of Him; because it never has come to understand how He is meek and lowly in heart, and how He longs to give rest to our souls. It cannot anticipate His blessed will by petitions such as these of the Psalmist:—"Teach me to do the thing that pleaseth Thee, for Thou art my

God: let Thy loving Spirit lead me forth into the land of righteousness. Quicken me, O Lord, for Thy Name's sake: and for Thy righteousness sake bring my soul out of trouble."

Yet this is the most natural breathing of the heart which rejoices in the Spirit. It appeals to the Heavenly Father for His guidance just because it has learnt, by his holy comfort, to anticipate the blessed motions of His will.

And then the wholesomeness of this joy in the Holy Ghost will confer a gracious readiness of human sympathy, which is one of the surest guides to a sound judgment. It lifts us out of preoccupation with ourselves; makes us healthily and intimately conversant with the minds of the people about us; teaches the lesson so beautifully described as, "beginning to see ourselves from without and our fellows from within: to know our own for one among the thousand undenoted countenances of the city street, and to divine in others the throb of human agony and hope." And so he who, by rejoicing in the Lord, has been lifted from the morbid depths, into which selfishness and egotism could plunge him, acquires this pervading element of sound judg-

ment,—that he discerns with a ready intuition the effect of his words and his actions on the sensitive feelings of those around him. He no longer brings out, with a gloomy recklessness, the first phrase which will express, with the greatest force, what he is feeling in a selfish isolation; but he picks his words and chastens his acts, lest the morbidness of his own indiscipline should impair the free joyousness of other hearts.

If, then, a first point of right judgment of the kind for which Christians ought to pray, be the power of so ordering our lives as that others shall be helped and rendered happy, the sympathy which comes of inward brightness will be one of the greatest helps to its attainment.

There is a cheerfulness which is far from sympathetic, a buoyancy of mere animal spirits, which is hard on less elastic temperaments that cannot enter into its animation. The temperament which Shakspere calls "robustious;" which is noisily and obtrusively high-spirited, just because it is superabundantly endowed with the energy and spring of sheer youth—this may often fail of all helpfulness, may be far from promoting in its possessor any tenderness or

sympathy for others. It must be mellowed by experience and by suffering, must learn to look for support for itself in the joy of inward communing with God, before it can attain to the right judgment which makes allowances and bears people's burdens. It is the "comfort," be it observed, of the Holy Ghost, for which we pray in connection with right judgment: and comfort presupposes something wanting, some sense of sin or failure, some consciousness of want of support, some needs which mere cheeriness of temperament would utterly fail to supply —before which it were almost true to say that "robustious" animal spirits are the first to be utterly prostrated. This tender consciousness of need in ourselves, this poverty of spirit before God, which learns that His "comfort" is essential to it, which has had to keep itself "low, like a weaned child,"—it is this that acquires that grace of sympathy which so wonderfully conduces to sound judgment.

But granted cheerful reliance upon God, a reliance which has grown of the sense of need, and of finding how God can supply it, and then, in all that concerns ourselves and others, there

comes a courage, a readiness to go forward, a capability of undertaking any task, by which God can be glorified and man helped. The distant bearings of things will be seen, with all the possible difficulties which grow of courageous undertakings. But the judgment which is chivalrously trustful faces difficulties, not by ignoring them, but by trusting in God to bring one through them. It knows no selfish ambition, and no "craven fear of being great," but it sometimes finds greatness thrust upon it, because it dares what others have refused. This judgment appreciates God's resources by what it knows of its own want of resource. It goes straight to the heart of every difficulty, and cleaves its way through by sheer gallantry. It "enjoys the heart of the joy" of victory, while the conflict is still at its sorest, because it knows that God has taken the event upon Himself. Doubt of that never leads to sound judgment, any more than self-confidence could do. But to throw oneself wholly upon God, to know that the measure of one's helplessness is the measure of the help that He is pledged to, to fling oneself generously into the conflict, leaving all to Him and to His grace—this

triumphs, where a craven want of joyousness does but lead to acquiescence in defeat.

The connection between joyousness and right judgment might, indeed, almost be summed up in a single sentence—that the worst want of judgment that we can know is want of perfect confidence in God, and that confidence can never be perfect except it be pervaded by joyousness.

A sound judgment on God's will about ourselves, growing out of the sympathy of our spirit with the Teacher Who takes us in hand; a sympathetic judgment about others, growing out of the inward comfort of the Spirit; a courageous judgment about difficulties, engendered by confidence in Himself—may He grant us these, this Whitsuntide, "Who, as at this time taught the hearts of His faithful people by sending to them the light of the Holy Spirit."

THE TRUE BALANCE OF DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE.

Ephes. iii., 14, &c. "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

The Sermon of Trinity Sunday is always a difficulty to me. I feel less certain than on any other day of being able to carry you with me. And I confess that I have been tempted, very often, to be impatient, and to lay the blame on the congregation, to think that they ought to go along with me, when I know, as a fact, that they do not.

For to-day I have made a very special effort to bring my thoughts into sympathy with yours, to approach the great lesson of the day in a spirit which may carry you along with me. And I ask you to make an effort, on your part, to go along with what I try to put before you.

What I mean more particularly is this:—There is brought before us on Trinity Sunday a certain great body of truths which have a claim on our belief as Christian men, and which, as thus having a claim on our belief, have also a bearing upon our practice.

St. Mary's, Poona, Trinity Sunday, June 12th, 1892.

Now to myself, and to all students of theology, these truths, regarded simply as truths, these truths as definitions of the Church, these truths in the history of their expression—in a word, in their purely doctrinal aspects—have an intense and abiding interest beyond almost any other subject. And I know that in speaking from the pulpit I have assumed that they ought to mean to others what I know that they mean to myself, and to all who have studied them as I have done. And also—which was more justifiable perhaps—I have expected that it should be plain to other people how important is their bearing on our practice, how necessary it is that we should apprehend them with an intimate, sympathetic apprehension, and should be prepared to follow out that apprehension, and enter into every one of its bearings.

I wish, to-day, to take it frankly for granted that this is not, and that it cannot be the case; that it is necessary, if one would influence the present day, to assume that its spiritual sympathies must run in a different channel; that the purely doctrinal aspect of these truths must sink into a secondary place; that practice must present

itself to us with that keenness and directness of appeal which was made by theological correctness to men of other times and other countries.

But I think I can make my meaning more plain to you by a parallel from another line of thought.

We have all heard of the study of heraldry, though perhaps few of us know anything about it; of how it was fashionable not so very long ago, to work up, at the cost of great trouble, the history of all the coats-of-arms which were in use among the nobility and gentry; to know just what were the arms of every family, and how they acquired the right of using them; how an intermarriage with this or that house had added this or that quartering to their arms, and so on, and so on, *ad infinitum*. It was part of the education of a gentleman to have an intimate knowledge of such things.

Nowadays we think less of these things. Indeed, instead of thinking it the training of a gentleman to study them and have them by heart, we are apt, if we find people much occupied with them, to think it an indication of just the opposite, to suppose that they take a vulgar view of life, and value people on quite a false principle.

Yet we are far from regarding it as unimportant, from what stock a family or an individual derives its origin and history. On the contrary, we perhaps realise more keenly, what a difference it makes in every way to be sprung of an honourable stock. But in asking about the family antecedents of any person who desired to be connected with us, we should go to work in a different fashion, and aim at a different result. It is not the mere pureness of the blood, or the position of the family in the past, which we regard as the point of first importance. But we realise how the character of the individual will be derived to a very great degree from those who have preceded, and who have trained him. We know that the refinement of his thoughts, that his conceptions of what is honourable and dignified, that his keenness about truthfulness or chastity, his abhorrence of taking a mean advantage, his generosity about money or money's worth will depend to a very great extent on the traditions in which he has been brought up, and even on the blood which he inherits. And, again, we regard it as all important that his physical antecedents should be good, that there should be no

taint in the blood of the family, but that he should come of a healthy parentage.

But after all, is the difference so very great between this way of looking at the matter, and the other, which I spoke about just now? We may call the one the heraldic view of things and the other the evolutionary view of them; but when we think of it, the result is much the same, when either principle is sensibly applied. For the subject of each method of enquiry is the family antecedents of the individual, the traditions and the *physique* which he inherits. Each method is capable, I suppose, of a foolish, or of a vulgar application. We may be foolish enough to think only of position, of social or of antiquarian considerations; when we ought to be remembering, perhaps, that it is possible to be very aristocratic and yet to inherit a bad tradition, and that both morally and physically. Or we may forget that good moral traditions and a stainless physical development may co-exist with a degree of unrefinement which would render them practically valueless.

In other words, we should be equally unwise were we to attach the old importance to heraldry,

to the study of families and coats-of-arms, as we should be were we to condemn it altogether, to treat it as nonsensical antiquarianism which had no bearing upon ourselves in the present day. It represents under a very handy form many facts which we want to bear in mind for our guidance in practical life.

Now there are two ways of approaching Christian truth, which I think bear a certain analogy to these two ways of asking about people's families;—we may be so anxious about orthodoxy of doctrine as to forget that it must issue in Christian practice; or we may so treat practice as everything, as to forget that it must be founded upon God's Truth.

Now I would take the lesson of Trinity Sunday, and look first at its most practical aspect, as we all had it set before us in our Catechism, and then see how that practical aspect of it leads us on to a right belief about God.

After we have rehearsed the Articles of our faith, the next question which comes in the Catechism is:—"What dost thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy Belief?" And we all were taught to reply:—First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who

hath made me and all the world. Secondly, in God the Son who hath redeemed me and all mankind. Thirdly, in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth me, and all the elect people of God."

Nothing there, you see, about the relations of the Three Persons to One another, or to the Godhead as a whole, but three most practical lessons about how we are to think of the blessed Persons in all our own daily relations to Them.

That God made us, that God redeemed us, that God sanctifies us—this is the practical side of to-day's lessons. This is what was put before us in our childhood as the all-important part of our belief—that God the Eternal, the All-Perfect stands to each of us in three practical relations, which are to us the most important embodiment of the truth about the Nature of God.

That each of these practical relations represents something deeper than itself; that far behind what God is to you and me, there lies something which God is in Himself; that He is what He is to you and me, just because of what He is in Himself;—this also is undoubtedly true, and this also we are bound to believe. But it is impossible that this should stand first in the thought of the

majority among us; nay, it is impossible that it should make at all the same appeal to us as the practical side of the truth. It did once appeal to people's minds—there is no use in denying the fact—in a way in which it does not appeal to the greater part of us now in the present day; it did appeal to those who wrote the Creeds with just the same directness and keenness with which the practical truth appeals to us. Nay, if we find it difficult, at present, to attach importance enough to pure doctrine, it is undeniable that in many former ages people used to find it equally impossible to attach enough importance to practice as compared with orthodoxy of belief. Even the history of some of the great Councils is stained with terrible sins on the part of the very champions of the truth, to whom we owe it that we inherit a right belief. If any Archbishop of to-day were to behave as St. Cyril behaved when he was dealing with the heretic Nestorius, we should find that the whole civilised world would rise up against the truth which he was supporting, and would say that what was advocated by such arrogance could not be God's truth, but must be error. And yet we all owe it to St. Cyril that we

have been taught to believe rightly in Jesus Christ.

But, indeed, I need not go centuries back for illustrations of what I have in view: I have known people and sets of people myself who forgot all fairness and all charity when they were contending for orthodoxy of belief. Belong to their own little circle, and you might break a good many of God's Commandments, and not be thought a penny the worse of: your orthodoxy atoned for it all. Presume to be outside that little circle, and you would get credit for nothing that was good, how exemplary soever were your life.

We all find it easy to condemn them, to see the onesidedness of their beliefs, and the consequent distortion of their practice. But I am not sure that we find it quite so easy to adjust the relative importance to be attached to doctrine and to practice in the ordering of our own life and thoughts.

Just come back to that practical lesson, which I read to you out of the Catechism, and you will see that the practices of godliness which we feel to be its principal teaching are based, as their

very foundation, on the belief which has been put into our mouths.

That I was made by God the Father; that I was redeemed by God the Son, and that I am sanctified by God the Holy Spirit—the practical and the doctrinal truths of it are absolutely inseparable from one another: I might as well deny the moral obligations as neglect the doctrinal truths. The practice perhaps appeals to me more keenly, but the truth is the foundation of the morality: the doctrine elicits less response, but the morality is the outcome of the doctrine.

Take this, then, as the lesson for the day—to strike a balance between doctrine and practice in your conceptions of our blessed religion; to accept frankly the necessary fact that your sympathy with statements of doctrine is less keen than men's used to be of old; that you are inclined to dwell chiefly on practice, almost to the exclusion of the other. But if you do not find upon the whole that abstract truth seems to lead you towards practice, then be all the more carefully determined that your practice of what you know to be the truth lead you on to appreciation of true doctrine.

That God the Father made you—if you are trying as you ought to be trying to act out this in your practice, to live every hour of your life as one who belongs absolutely to God, by every right of a Creator over His creature;—that God the Son redeemed you—if you are trying to live up to this, to treat yourself as owing your very self to the Saviour Who gave Himself for you;—that God the Holy Ghost is your sanctifier—if your life is conformable to this, so that you abide in the chastening recollection of a Presence more than human within you—if, I say, you are bearing these things in mind, you will find that the blessed truth of the THREE IN ONE will grow out with an unspeakable clearness, into reality and definiteness before you.

For if your Saviour and His Sacrifice for your sins be practically present to your mind, you must ever be worshipping Him, adoring Him: it will be happiness to you to think of His majesty, to give Him all the honour which is His due. And if the Presence of the Spirit within you be matter of tender, daily reverence, restraining you from all that is unworthy of Him, spurring you on to do justice to His assistance; then again,

you must be learning day by day that the power which He communicates to you is no creaturely, finite operation, but is being wrought in you by One Who is very God.

And is not this the whole doctrinal lesson which Trinity Sunday sets before us—that as the Father Who made us is God, so the Son Who redeemed us is God, and so the Spirit Who sanctifies us is God?

Be assured, if you are living in practice as though you have been redeemed by a Divine Saviour, and as though you are being sanctified by a Divine Comforter, you will find it, so to speak, come naturally to you to pay the Divine homage which is due to each Person of the Trinity in Unity.

SINCERITY AND COMPLAISANCE.

"And seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find fruit thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves: for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered and said to it: No man eat fruit of thee hereafter, for ever. And his Disciples heard it."—*St. Mark*, xi. 13, 14.

Christ had entered on the period of His Ministry which immediately preceded His passion. And being about to surrender himself as a victim to atone for the sins of the world, He presented Himself to its gaze for a few days in His sternest capacity as its judge. Time does not permit me to point out to you how this is the single characteristic of all the early days of the Holy Week. Careful study of St. Matthew in especial will make this abundantly plain. But at least the one act I have selected is a conspicuous exercise of this function. It was the one acted parable of our Lord's life, the one exercise of His supernatural powers which was put forth with no other intention than to symbolise a spiritual truth. In

Bombay Cathedral, March 22nd, 1885.

every other miracle of His life He did something for the bodies, or the estate of the suffering people about Him. The power which was put forth in this act was exerted for destruction alone, and, unless it was simply an acted parable, it would almost have had a savour of petulance at variance with all that we know of Him.

We must look closely, then, at the act and its significance; for it is given us as a sample of the judgments which He is passing every day upon ourselves.

It was the morning which succeeded Palm-Sunday, and our Lord and His immediate disciples were passing over the very same ground where the half-hearted excitement of the day before had escorted Him in procession to the City. He had gone into the Temple in the evening, and assured Himself by the testimony of His own eyes, that the abuses which He had put down in it before had resumed their old domain within its courts. And now He was going to cleanse it again, and, having cleansed it, to establish Himself within its precincts, and there to arraign priests and people on solemn charges of unfaithfulness to their privileges.

In His zeal for the performance of His work, He had started without breaking His fast. And now, on the way to the City, the sight of a fig-tree by the road reminds Him of His bodily necessities. It was not the season for figs, so St. Mark takes care to inform us. But this tree gave promise of fruit produced exceptionally early. For the fruit comes in advance of the leaves, and this tree, as it stood conspicuous by the way-side, was waving with leaves out of season.

He draws near to it for the satisfaction of His requirements, and the show of rustling leaves turns out to be all that it has produced. The tree is as empty of fruit as its neighbours which had held out no hopes.

The disappointment and the display which had led to it chime in with the stern thoughts about his countrymen which were working in the mind of Jesus Christ, and he writes up his parable in great letters on the frame of the deceptive tree. The same doom of perpetual barrenness which was to fall on the Jews as a nation is pronounced on the tree which was their type:—"No man eat fruit of thee henceforward, for ever." And immediately it withered away from the roots; so

completely that when they pass in the evening, there is no trace of its former succulence remaining.

What, then, was the head and front of the tree's offending? In what was it a type of the Jewish nation? It was not simply for being fruitless that it was cursed. In that respect it was the same as all its neighbours. Mere fruitlessness would have typified nothing, at a time of year when no fruit was to be looked for. It was the fact of having leaves without fruit, of being, to outward appearance, in advance of other trees; while in reality, it was just what they were.

Insincerity, unreal profession, the pretence to more goodness than one has—it was the doom of the Lord upon these which was typified in His cursing of the fig-tree.

A very unnecessary subject to be dealt with from a pulpit in Bombay, the very last fault of which we are in danger in English society in India—is that the thought that comes into some minds as I announce it for our subject this evening?

In its literal application, perhaps, there is less need to discourse upon it here than in many other

countries in the world, and in many other ages of human history. For there is a certain openness, I admit, about the attitude which we adopt towards religion when the restraints of English life have been relaxed. People *are* more inclined to be themselves in their observance or non-observance of religious practices, in this country, than in England at least.

But does it follow that we have no insincerities, because we are free from the special forms which have prevailed in other countries and other ages? Not, I think, if we brought ourselves with us when we moved from one hemisphere to another. So long as the old Adam goes with us, I think that a change of abode will but alter the form of the temptation to unreal professions of some kind. Nay, unless I am very greatly mistaken, we shall find that the life that we live here has its own special forms of insincerity, against which we have all to be on guard. Indian life has its own rustling leaves, it tosses its own shade over the highways with promises of its own special fruit, and sometimes, when we peer into their shade, we shall find that we are deluded by false hopes.

States of life, like individual men, are bound to have the defects of their qualities. The very fact that we live under a despotism, how beneficent soever it may be, makes it certain that the virtues and the failings which characterise the life of this country will not be the same which are found where men live under free institutions. That sturdy independence of opinion, that fearlessness in professing one's beliefs, except perhaps in an anonymous form, that determination to treat men as they deserve, which is the boast of the English character as a whole, are not to be expected to flourish, and are not, as a matter of fact, found to flourish under the shadow of a highly developed bureaucracy. A certain crop of insincerities is to be looked for, and, as a fact, it is often to be found.

The discipline of our great official services develops a class of good qualities which are the very salt of Indian life. That a man should be trained from his youth to unhesitating and loyal obedience to orders which he is forbidden to criticise; that he should have to throw himself into the hearty development of a policy with which he need not be in sympathy, under a chief

whom he would not have chosen—these things have created a type of character, with which we could dispense very badly in the administration of an empire such as ours.

But this training, like everything human, brings its own corresponding temptations. We live, not officials alone, but all of us to some extent at least, under the dominating presence of official-dom, and in a society in which official status carries social precedence along with it. Can it fail that temptations to complaisance should be rife under such a state of things? It is true there is no society anywhere, in which this is not to some extent the case, in which individuals do not derive their importance not only from the legitimate weight which belongs to intrinsic superiority, but from their place in the table of precedence, their command over money—or credit- their power of pulling the wires of the common life.

But here there are other influences at work, in addition to the exaggerated importance which attaches to social distinction in a society so small as our own, and living at such close quarters with its social centre.

It is always uncomfortable, at the best, to be on any but cordial terms with one's immediate official superiors: it is never amiss to stand well with the ultimate dispensers of patronage. We most of us live under a state of things, in which we know that we depend largely on our superiors for our comfort, our position and our emoluments. And we often know that there are those under our orders who feel that on our opinion of them they depend for these good things of life. And, after all, we are but men, on both sides; with a keen appreciation of the good things which it is in the power of our superiors to dispense to us; not indifferent to the tickling of flattery, when adroitly administered by our juniors.

He must have a great belief in his own sincerity, who feels, in the position of a junior, that frankness in his utterances on official matters, that absolute naturalness in social life are not complicated by conditions like these, to a degree which might imperil their existence, apart from an uncompromising conscientiousness. He must believe greatly in his own impartiality who, having such patronage to dispense, dare affirm that he is never biassed in its exercise, by consi-

derations which make it difficult for his juniors to treat him with no complaisance.

We may have the best will in the world to think of nothing but the interests of the public, to set the stamp of our approval on good work, to brand with official reprobation incompetency or want of conscientiousness. But is there one who so believes in himself as to feel sure that graceful deference in his juniors, that delicate compliments and attentions, that appreciation of the spirit of our policy—or what we set down as appreciation—do not influence us in making up our minds as to how we may best promote the public good? On the degree to which seniors understand how they are open to such influences as these, must depend the severity of the temptations to which their juniors in any service are exposed. But as long as official superiors are, after all, but fallible men, so long will the temptation to complaisance be one of the special dangers of Indian life.

"No man eat fruit of thee henceforward, for ever;"—

So flashed forth the words that scathed the fig-tree which typified the vice of insincerity.

"No man eat fruit of *thee* henceforward, for ever":—Such perhaps may be the sentence upon yourself. You might have done something, perhaps, to introduce real improvements into your department: you had intelligence and industry enough, if only you had had frankness to speak out, and hit the blot which was marring its work. But you remembered the berth which was to fall vacant, and determined not to injure your prospects by running counter to the views which were in favour. And now the complaisance is engrained, and you never can find it worth while to disturb what will last out your time. Comfort, position, emolument—perhaps you have got them all, at the cost of official sincerity: "No man eat fruit of *thee* henceforward for ever."

Or you had social qualities, perhaps, which might have made you powerful for good. And there were those of whom you know very well that they were far from being all that they ought. It would hardly be exaggerating, perhaps, to say that you were very well aware that there were social plague-spots in the life that surrounded you. But then in a small station like yours, in the little circle of your husband's surroundings,

where *esprit de corps* was so important, and where, though you say little about this, it was so easy to injure his prospects, was it to be expected that the disapproval you felt should not be dissembled and glossed over? Could you refuse hospitality so pleasant, because you could not but look askance at your hostess? Could you break up a society so united, because you felt that it was your duty to younger women to show, as a Christian matron ought to show, that men who were leading bad lives were no company for the innocent and the unsuspecting?

You maintained a high standard yourself—or so at least you supposed, not seeing that such complaisance was eating out what was highest in your life, was blurring all the sharpness of the distinctions, by which good and evil are marked off. You have kept yourself blameless no doubt, but what of your social sincerity? but what of the elevating influence which once you might have exerted on society? "No man eat fruit of *thee* henceforward for ever." Nay, you are happy if fruitlessness alone be the worst that has followed from your example. Younger women, with less knowledge of the world, saw the leaves of your

social profession: they thought, surely there must be fruit there as well. Has the fruit that they gathered been harmless, when they, with less vantage of previous training, dared to pluck of what you had advertised as wholesome social fruitage? Ask some husband whose home has been desolated, ask some family which has been neglected or deserted, whose example first encouraged the wife and mother to throw herself into dangerous society.

My words may be feeble, I know; may perhaps be thought open to exception. But I know how insincerities like these would have been treated by Him Who cursed the fig-tree.

It was not in religion alone that He would have us to be without dissimulation. His indignation would flash out, just the same, at the complaisance, at the cowardice, at the dissembling which led any one to make gain for himself by professions which he knew to be unreal, in any department of life.

DOMINATED BY CHRIST.

"Thanks be unto God which always leadeth us in triumph in Christ."—2 *Cor.* ii. 14.

I have read the words as they stand in the Revised Version, and those who know their Bibles well will have observed that it differs from the Old Version. Sometimes it is rather dry work, bringing out the difference between two versions. But in this case I have no fear that it will prove so: for it just makes the whole difference to the picture, whether the Apostle wrote "thanks be to God which always *causeth us to triumph* in Christ," or, "thanks be to God which always *leadeth us in triumph* in Christ."

In either case he pictures himself as taking part in a triumphal procession. He sees, himself, and he would bring before his readers, the return of a victorious general to the city which ruled all the world. The streets are lined with spectators, the windows and the house-tops are crowded with them. The glorious car of the victor is being majestically drawn to the temple; that he may lay his garland at the feet of the

St. Mary's, Poona, June 23rd, 1889.

divinity, in whose name Rome has conquered once more. And who are these just behind the glorious car, dragged in chains to swell the triumph of the victor? The chief of his conquered enemies are being haled at the wheels of his chariot, to be put to death as he mounts the steps to the temple.

Such is the picture which the Apostle would set before us. And the question between the two renderings is the question, what place in the great spectacle the writer is claiming for himself. In the old rendering, "which *causeth us to triumph*," he describes himself as the conqueror in the chariot. In the new rendering, "which *leadeth us in triumph*," he describes himself as the prisoner at its wheels.

There can be no doubt that the new version is the correct one. The Apostle says that he is thankful to God for being dragged, a prisoner, behind the chariot of his Conqueror. The triumphal car which he pictures to himself as rolling on through the world to all time, is that of the King of Glory, for Whom the gates were bidden lift up their heads. For his own part, it was the best boast of his life that he was

dominated, dragged a prisoner behind it, one of those who had been struck down in fair fight by the sword of the Spirit in Christ's hands.

I wish to examine the contents of the great idea which is embodied in this figurative expression of being dragged at the chariot-wheels of Christ, and of being thankful for the absolute domination which He is thus said to have taken over one's being.

We are all familiar, in some form or another, with the thought of being thus dominated by something; of a life being taken possession of, held fast, haled about by what is stronger than itself.

It is a terribly familiar experience, how a character may be dominated by a single passion; how hatred, or avarice, or vanity, or drink may become the single paramount force, before which all restraining considerations may be driven like chaff before the wind.

Less familiar, but still matter of experience to all who have seen life under varied aspects, is the way a single dominant ideal may impress itself upon a character and a career. The ideal may be a mere personal crotchet, amounting almost to a monomania, or it may be a wide scheme of

benevolence, raising hundreds of one's fellow-men from degradation. It may be enthusiasm under the guidance of common-sense, or it may be so utterly wild and one-sided as to blind the person possessed by it to a whole world of qualifying considerations. A man may exalt total abstinence, for instance, from being a means of rescuing the degraded, into a religion, or even into a fanaticism. Or he may be so persuaded that all misery and crime are the result of the over-crowding of great cities, that the improvement of industrial dwellings may become his Gospel, his panacea for all evils. These are instances in illustration of a great principle, how a character may take its bent, its whole tint, from some single dominant ideal, by which it is possessed and carried away.

But the most powerful of all possible influences is the impress which a dominant character can leave upon weaker personalities. The foundation of the great religious Orders is the most obvious historical example which rises at once to one's mind; the influence which Francis of Assisi exerted on the men of the thirteenth century; or, more powerful and more permanent

still, the influence which Ignatius Loyola exerted upon those of the sixteenth. Here you have the character of a single man reproducing itself in the lives of many others; until, as you read of any Jesuit Mission in the most flourishing days of the Order, you rise from the perusal of its annals, with the feeling that its members were hardly *men* in the sense of being individuals at all; that they seem stamped out of some plastic material, to reproduce the ideas of another.

The three forms, then, in which dominant influences present themselves so obviously to all of us are—the influence of a master-passion, the influence of a dominant ideal, and the influence of an overmastering personality.

These may each take very different complexions. The influence by which people are dominated may be of the noblest or of the vilest description. The tint which the character takes on when it is constantly exposed to one light, may be of the most lurid or of the most ashen hue. A man, a society, even a nation may become the mere living embodiment of a purpose of unscrupulous ambition, or of an enthusiasm for glorious

self-devotion. It may be a revenge for which everything is sacrificed; or it may be, as at the end of the last century, that a whole people is so intoxicated with the thought of liberty, as its leaders had interpreted freedom, that the nation is impelled as a single man to make war upon the order of a whole Continent. But whatever be the moral character of the master-passion, whatever the worth or worthlessness of the ideal, whatever the width or the fanaticism of the character which has dominated weaker wills, there is one thing that we invariably find where an impulse such as this has been exercised, and that is, that it becomes a power to be reckoned with. We may abhor it, but we dare not despise it. It may revolt us, but one thing we cannot do,—we cannot leave it out of account, cannot treat it, in the shock of jarring forces, as what the French call a "negligible quantity," *une quantité negligeable*. And by some such force the Apostle tells us in the text that he himself had been so utterly taken hold of, that he was, and that he boasted of being, like a prisoner dragged in triumph through the streets.

To which of the three classes of forces did this influence, so dominant, belong? Was it a pas-

sion, was it an ideal, was it a person, at whose chariot he was thus haled a prisoner? Of course we reply at once that it was a Person; that he was the willing slave and prisoner of Jesus Christ. Yet we shall find in this case most of all, what we find in a lower degree in the cases which I quoted just now, that to be dominated by the Personality of Jesus Christ means to be brought under the sway of an influence which combines all these three wondrous forces. To be dragged at the chariot-wheels of Jesus Christ means to be dominated by the influence of a Person, but of a Person who combines in Himself the embodiment of the most marvellous ideal, and the sway of the most irresistible passion by which the mind of man can be possessed. The passion for saving human souls, and the ideal of attaining to Divine Righteousness —these forge the twofold chain by which prisoners are bound to Christ's chariot. Let me try to describe each of them to you—this passion for saving human souls, and this ideal of attaining Divine Righteousness. Believe me, I know the feebleness of my words when I attempt to grapple with such subjects; as I think of what I ought to

know about them, and contrast it with the actual experience, out of which alone I can speak to you. But at least, when I have done my best with the lesser influences, I can end by taking you straight to the greatest—can say something of what He can be to you, to Whom we owe it that we know them at all.

First, then, of the passion for saving souls. To know a soul that Christ bought with His Blood, and to know that it is not given up to Him; to know that, as far as it is concerned, the Sacrifice of the Cross has been in vain; to know that for the sake of that soul He would come down from Heaven over again, and undergo all that He underwent for the world, if only it would give itself to Him; and then to see it, in sullenness or in carelessness, rejecting all His offers of love; to know that He can use you, even you, to bridge over the terrible gulf that yawns between Himself and that soul; nay, to know that, as far as can be seen, it lies with you whether that gulf shall be bridged; to see the pierced Hands stretched out, and to hear the pleading voice of the Saviour; to have done what you can to enforce them, to bring home to that soul in its

aloofness that all this is meant for it—and then to stand by, for you can do no more, and ask what the result is to be; to mark the gradual softening and yielding, or to see how indifference asserts itself, or how obstinacy hardens into reprobation—you must have lived through these things for yourself before you can form an adequate ideal of the passion for saving human souls.

But there are other ways of learning much about it. St. Paul is not the only prisoner who has been haled from land to land, at the chariot-wheels of Jesus Christ, by the passion for saving souls. The life of a Xavier or of a Martyn was so permeated by the desire to save souls that no hardship or trial or difficulty was too great to be endured in the endeavour.

No other passion, by which humanity can be stirred, has like power to make everything seem trivial except the attainment of its single object. No other has elicited the same sacrifices, has so lent to the characters possessed by it that absolute indifference to other objects which makes the master-passion such a power.

For, indeed, the desire to save souls is the first of the two great conceptions which we

associate with the Person of our Master. The reflection of His Own desire to save souls forms the first chain by which prisoners in all ages have been bound to the chariot of the Crucified.

The second is the ideal of Divine Righteousness.

The two, alas! are not absolutely inseparable: there have been those in many ages of the world who have thought that the ideal of Divine Righteousness could be attained in selfish isolation, with no opportunity for saving souls. And there have been those who in their passion for saving souls, according to their own beliefs on the subject, have thought that all means were allowable, however flagrantly they contradict Divine Righteousness. But the highest manifestations of each are absolutely inseparable from the other. The nearest approach to Divine Righteousness is to be found in the saving of souls: the surest way to save souls is to keep righteousness before one above all things. Since, then, they are inseparable, yet not identical, let us look at the ideal of Divine Righteousness, before we pass to the thought of the Master Who is the absolute embodiment of them both.

To see before you the absolute Holiness which it is granted to you to feel after; to have meditated on the spotlessness of Jesus Christ, on His devotion to the will of Almighty God, on His embodying in His Own single person every perfection of sinless Humanity; and then to turn your eyes upon yourself, and to ask in what single particular you come up to, or approach to, or come in sight of, the pattern thus showed you in the Mount—you must have done this before you get even a glimmering of what it is that Almighty God sets before you. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect:"—there, uncompromising, stands the ideal. Its very sternness, the uncompromisingness of its demand, is what gives it its wondrous fascination. Reduce it to anything lower, to anything, as we should say, more attainable, and it loses that spell over the spirit which draws us so wonderfully after it. Let it contrast less sharply, less aggressively, with what we know of our natural standard, and the very motive for aiming at it is gone. But put us in contact with a Being Whose Essence is Holiness itself; tell us, there is the standard to be aimed

at; there, that which alone can meet your cravings, and at once we are enchained by it, enslaved to it, with the longing which can take no denial, with the hunger as for necessary food. "Search me, O Lord, and try the ground of my heart: prove me and examine my thoughts, and see if there be *any* evil way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting:"—there is an instance of the fascination of the ideal, of the attractive power of the unattainable, of the passion, the hunger, the yearning which are aroused by the sight of what is perfect. Take any lower standard than this, any aim which shall appear more attainable, and you shall find that the glamour is lost, that the incentive to striving is departed, that the vision, the glory, the consecration have faded "into the light of common day." It is the ideal, for which we hunger and thirst, and nothing short of the ideal will content us.

It is the ideal: yes, blessed be God! it is the ideal, but it is also the Real. It is ideal, just because it has become real in the Person of Jesus the Master.

The passion for saving human souls brought

Him down from the Throne of Heaven into this world. The ideal of Divine Righteousness was the fire that consumed Him when He came. To save souls, by fulfilling all righteousness, to draw them by becoming their Righteousness, to keep them to eternity with Himself by enabling them to attain to that Righteousness—there you have the whole work of Jesus Christ as it shall stand finished at the consummation of all things.

And even now, to each of His Own, He is fulfilling these things day by day. He draws near them with His passion for their salvation, makes them know what He has done for their sake, makes them realise that for them individually all this was done and was endured. Then He draws them to give themselves to Him. The yearning that is in Him for their salvation incites a longing to avail themselves of it. The yearning that He has after them produces something corresponding on their part. Not even in the bliss of eternity shall they love Him as He has loved them. But amid the struggles and the shortcomings of earth, it is a love which shall correspond to His love that they are impelled to strive after offering Him. There

comes the longing to save their own souls, because those souls are the price of the Precious Blood. He has made Himself indispensable to them: they give themselves to Him because they must. Henceforth they lie passive in His Hands, and allow Him to do with them as He will. They are taken possession of by the single ideal of becoming everything that their Saviour would have them; first generally, then in fuller detail as they learn to appreciate His will for them. Then they learn the terrible obstacles which their own will and impulses interpose between them and the ideal set before them: and by degrees they are schooled to remove them, though it be as the plucking out of the right eye. And all the time, as the hindrances are being removed, the stern, clear-cut beauty of the ideal grows out into greater distinctness, and they betake themselves with a deepening enthusiasm to reproducing its outlines within. Thus He draws them, as He has promised, with bands of love: the first of the chains is fully forged, by which in every age He has bound His willing captives to His chariot,—the ideal of Divine Righteousness which they have found in the Person of their Master.

The second is soon added, in the passion which they acquire for saving souls. They realise how other souls are turned away from Him. They are invaded by the shame and the horror of a world which is indifferent or hostile to the Saviour Who died to redeem it. Safe themselves in the embrace of His Arm, they appreciate what it were to be without Him. From what His love has done for themselves they take in His infinite ability to save every soul which will come to Him. Love for all for whom Christ died takes possession of them with the power of a master-passion.

Do we know aught of the binding power of those two chains? of that longing to save human souls which can possess the character with a worthy passion? of that craving for the Righteousness of God which can permeate the life with a divine ideal? Be assured that if we know anything of them, they are chains which must bind us fast to a Conqueror. He must have that absolute dominion over our souls which is described as a being bound to His chariot. We must have no will of our own save to follow exactly where He leads. The yoke may be easy, but it *is* a yoke: the

burden may be light, but it *is* a burden. The proud back must be bowed to take it up; the stubborn neck must be submitted to wear it. But then, once assumed, it becomes our glory; we would not lay it down if we might. For He who bade us to take up His yoke, He who calls us to carry His burden, added this, in the very words which required it,—"and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

SUFFERING AND ITS COMPENSATIONS.

"That we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."—2 *Cor.* i. 4.

The world's a room of sickness, where each heart
Knows its own anguish and unrest,
The truest wisdom there, and noblest art,
Is his who skills of comfort best.

The conditions under which we live in this world render him, perhaps, our greatest benefactor, who can throw light upon the problem of suffering. Most insoluble, most intractable of questions, it opens on us from our earliest childhold, it only ends its importunities with our life. None refuses more absolutely or more persistently to be put off without an answer of some kind: none exposes with more merciless logic all answers which are inadequate and superficial.

I propose, therefore, to enter upon the subject by laying down some of the limitations, within which alone we can deal with it.

We must begin by acknowledging frankly that the existence of evil and pain is in itself an insoluble problem, assuming God to be All-powerful as

St. Mary's Church, Poona, August 4, 1889, *Hospital Sunday.*

well as loving. Being such creatures as we know ourselves to be, prone to sin, averse from duty, ever tending to the downward course, we can perhaps see that the existence of suffering has a remedial, a merciful aspect. Nay, I should perhaps not be saying too much if I added that not simply as a remedy, but also as a righteous retribution, we can discriminate a certain appropriateness in our being liable to suffer, and in our suffering.

But behind all that we can discern on this point, there remains, as intractable as ever, the original perplexity of perplexities—how we came to be morally such beings as that suffering should be appropriate for us remedially; still more that it should be called for as retribution.

We must make the large assumption, to begin with, of a state of things, perplexing, nay, inexplicable, in which pain becomes the less of two evils, its infliction less unworthy of Almighty God than the state of things which would be entailed by its prevention.

Within this intellectual limitation the consideration of suffering must be confined, if it is not to prove simply futile.

On the moral side there is a farther limitation, to which we have to be content to submit, namely, that when all is said and done, by which the softer side of suffering can be brought out; when we have seen what it can effect in ourselves; when we have experienced what it can make us to other people; when we have dealt with submission and with sympathy; when we have exhausted endurance and crucifixion; when we have learnt how it unites us to Christ, and how it enables us to find Almighty God,—when all, I repeat, has been said and done, still suffering does not cease to be suffering, still agonized nerves vibrate on, torn spirits still writhe in their laceration.

With just these preliminary considerations—that suffering can never be explained, and that it never can cease to be suffering—I would go on to bring before you this evening, as most appropriate to a Hospital Sunday, the subject of the many alleviations by which suffering may be tempered and made endurable.

And, first, I would draw out in greater fulness a thought which I touched upon just now, namely, that suffering, to beings such as we are, has an undoubtedly remedial character. We see pain

correct faults and develop character in a manner which justifies it to us, as being, under existing conditions, the most beneficent factor in many lives.

It might perhaps have seemed impossible to us, apart from actual experience, to believe that such could be the case unless suffering could be clearly traced back to some wrong-doing or demerit in the individual; unless we could see that we had brought it upon ourselves by this or that specific disobedience, which had either caused it or directly exposed us to it. From the days of Job to our own times, people have looked for such a clue and have not found it.

Speaking generally, we look upon suffering as being the result of sin in the world; but we cannot always, perhaps cannot usually, trace out a specific connection between the merits and the destiny of individuals.

Yet nowhere can one appeal with greater confidence to the experience of those whom one addresses, than when one asks whether it is not a fact that few things so mellow a character, and few so fine away faults, as suffering received in the right spirit.

I do not leave out of account the cases where this cannot be predicated. There are those whose whole spirit seems to shrivel at the touch of what desolates their lives; where no compensating blessing of expansion seems ever to follow in this world. These cases form a part of the great mystery which I said that we must acknowledge, to begin with, when we approach the whole subject of suffering. Still, it holds good, as I have constantly seen, that God can make Himself known, that He seldom so fully makes Himself known as He frequently does to a wounded spirit.

He seems to make a kind of silence in the heart when bereft of its natural joys, to enable it to listen to His lightest whisperings, which before had been inaudible or half listened to. A new sense, almost, for things Divine seems to wake up under the touch of His rod when it has smitten the soul in all its love.

So much, indeed, is this the case, that there are those who, looking back over their lives, can trace every blessing which they prize dearest to seasons of darkness and desolation.

Now, if this be so, it will be worth while for a few minutes to ask how we can secure for ourselves the transmutation, so blessed and so wonderful, which thus converts our keenest pangs into our deepest blessings.

Perhaps the first rule which one would give would be that at a season of trial one should try to be quite still under God's hand. It will probably be sufficient in the first instance to confine oneself to a wise passivity; to just refusing an entrance to passion which would whirl us into thoughts of wild rebellion. "Be still, and know that I am God," seems perhaps the only voice from on high which at first we are capable of hearing. Wait: only be assured of one thing—that God's dealings are not always intelligible, that at first it is hardly possible that they should be so. He Is, and He knows you, and He loves you—cling to that and ask no more for the moment. It is much not willingly to doubt Him. The questioning may be there with great insistency:—How *can* one who loves me treat me thus? Do not willfully, waywardly, listen to it: lie still: you shall know more in His time. His time may not come in this world, but He is One

Who has assuredly promised us that "what we know not now we shall know hereafter."

Then, when time has carried you past the first shock, when you are compelled by the exigencies of daily life to remember that there are other things besides the grief which at first seemed to fill your whole horizon, it is well to beware of two things—either of hugging your sorrow to your bosom, and purposely maintaining it in its first intensity, or of trying to drown it in other things without letting it work out your Father's purposes. Ask quietly to be shown what they are. Do not take yourself to task for not knowing; do not think that He can have no purposes, because they do not make themselves plain; only ask that they may dawn on you as He will. And you will find that all the familiar objects with which your daily path is surrounded have a new presence pervading them from day to day. At first it may simply embitter them, but this need not always be the case. If you are watching for what God has in store for you, you may look to find that, though a glory has past away from them, still the light by which you now see them lets you deeper into their

meanings than before. It is the Cross which has been stamped upon them all, making them pregnant with new Divine meanings. You learn that you are to be, from henceforward, a sharer in the passion of your Master. It is sharp, for it is the Cross that you are to carry; but it is blessed, because it is the Cross of Jesus. And just because it is the Cross of Jesus, therefore, bearing it, you find that He is near you. None can bow themselves to bear that Cross, and not find that its print upon their nature brings a new conformity to His Image.

As I said at first, so here I repeat, the Cross does not cease to be the Cross because it is borne for His sake; but pain becomes transmuted, when so borne, into a blessing whose depth and whose far-reachingness is equalled by nothing in this world.

But the applications of thoughts such as these are confined, it may be, to the few. Let us turn to another compensation more intelligible to all of us alike.

There is a class of most exquisite graces, which are called into being by suffering; and which could have no existence apart from it. We dare not

say that it is well there should be suffering, in order that there may be sympathy and compassion. But we see that, life being what it is, a scene in which suffering plays a part, human nature, as we actually know it, is wonderfully the richer for their exercise. Indeed, we cannot picture to ourselves a condition in which they should have no place, without feeling that character, as we know it, would be stunted, deprived of half its beauty. And it is not merely that the opportunity of these graces is found in the sufferings of other people. It is that before you can develop them, you must first have suffered yourself. The proverbially harsh judgments of youth must have given way to the mellower estimates which suffering rightly used brings along with it—"when kind, calm years, exacting their accompt of pain, mature the mind."

A world in which these found no place, in which sympathy for sorrow was never called for, in which no travail-throes of our own had led to our having sympathy to offer—such a world might perhaps be a bright world, but it would not be the familiar, homely world, along whose ways we have all walked together; and which, despite

all the railings which are hurled at it, I think most of us have found a kindly world.

To come down a little more into detail: take life as we know it in this place, and imagine it all bright, with no sorrow, and therefore all hard, with no compassion; and I think very many will agree with me that it would have lost the one thing that we most admire in it, nay, the chief thing, at any rate, for which we love it. Many features for which one takes it to task are wiped out by the abundant generosity with which its sympathies are poured out to those in trial.

And this, as perhaps you have divined, is the reason why this subject of suffering suggested itself to me for this evening.

Your liberality is frequently appealed to for objects deserving your assistance. At the suggestion of one who has left us, who had a right to be heard on such a point, we have thought it advisable to set apart one Sunday, in which to ask you to add a few comforts to the lot of the patients in our Civil Hospital, to whom her time was so generously devoted. It is inevitable that in Government Hospitals there should be large scope for private liberality. Those who adminis-

ter the taxes of a poor country are compelled, in the expenditure of public money, to be guided by many considerations besides those of sympathy for suffering. With necessaries the patients are supplied: we ask you to add something to the little luxuries which sickness renders only not necessaries.

And we make this request with the more confidence because our Hospital has recently been enriched by services* which money could not buy, but which are given, in return for a bare maintenance, out of sympathy for God's suffering children. To that discipline, that absolute obedience which is the first essential of good nursing, the staff which carries out the doctors' orders in the Civil Hospital of Poona add that trained and self-controlled sympathy which is the second requisite of their profession. The second without the first were useless: the first without the second were loveless. But it is the boast of the trained lady-nurse, most of all is it that of the nursing-sister, that the sympathy which, apart from obedience, would but hinder the recovery of the patient has been schooled by a regular

* Those of the community of St. Mary, Wantage.

training, to be the handmaid of professional efficiency; that the training by which efficiency is secured has had, as a foundation on which to build, the sympathy which saves it from growing mechanical. In the noblest of secular professions, whose task is the alleviation of suffering, the doctor most efficient in command, and the nurse most useful in obedience, will be the one in whom the feeling of sympathy has been trained, till, instead of being a feeling, it has grown into an instinct of ministration. You have heard of Bishop Butler's great axiom, that our impulses, such as compassion or indignation, the oftener they are practically acted upon the more are they modified in two ways—the less of strong emotion does there go with them, and the more of instinctive practice. Now this is exactly what takes place in the professional life of which I speak, where it is found in its highest developments. The work must be undertaken in the first instance out of a profound sense of sympathy with suffering. That sympathy in its emotional manifestations, would be an actual hindrance to efficiency, but, acted out into practical usefulness, it is the ground-work of the most

perfect ministrations. Trained to absolute obedience and self-command, it turns its first impulse of fellow-feeling into the power of anticipating and relieving each demand of the most exacting of sufferers. It is too much inured to the sight of pain to be any longer perturbed or upset by it, to suffer any loss of self-command, or to be blinded to exactly what is needed for the permanent good of the sufferer. The real exigencies of the situation are kept in sight, not the longing to give a moment of relief.

To the effectiveness of this highest form of sympathy we ask you to contribute this evening. It is cramped and hindered on every hand by the economies which are an imperative duty in the Heads of a Government such as ours. We ask you to supplement those economies by giving out of your own superfluities to the relief of sufferers mostly poor.

ENDURANCE.

"He endured as seeing Him who is invisible."—*Heb.* xi. 27.

The story of the tried soul is much the same in any age and under either dispensation. Endurance and faith are for this world; sight and triumph belong to the other.

"As seeing the Unseen One, he held out":—could the history of a battered soul in our own day be expressed more succinctly, or more exactly, than it is in this brief record of an experience which belonged to thirty centuries ago?—not seeing, but acting as though he saw; not triumphing, but simply holding out. There are battered souls in every congregation; none more battered, I assure you, in the congregation, than are sometimes to be found in the pulpit. Let us look at it, then, together, for a little—at endurance, and the way to endure.

Just dwell, first, for we cannot dwell too often, on the bare fact that endurance is required of us, and will always be required in this world. How we all were persuaded, to begin with, that it was

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only required for a little while! How some height had but got to be breasted, and our Eldorado would be in view from the top; how some corner had but to be turned, and then would come the straight run in! At first it was,—when I am grown up,—wondrous words fraught with dim, delicious import; words telling of an entry on new worlds, whose dreamy joys had at least this much of certainty, that irritating restraints were to be unknown, that in those regions we should do what we liked! Did not grown-up people do all that we might not, and have everything that we only longed for, and go everywhere while we but gazed after them? Yes, certainly, we thought, to be grown-up would do away with the necessity for enduring: for how could there be anything to endure when you could be, and could do, what you pleased? We smile as we look back at all this: but after all are these dreams of our childhood so very different from some that we indulge in after experience ought to have corrected them? Do we all take it in with our manhood, that the course of the Christian life in this world will be one o endurance throughout? I am not sure but that

the eldest among us are the better for having the lesson re-enforced, "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Not, he that endureth for a time, and then enjoys the rest which he has earned, but, he that endureth to the end. Not, he who at some moment of intuition has seen the goal, as it were, but an arm's length off;—not that, believe me, in any case, but, he that endureth to the end. All this rings sternly, I know: the demand for endurance to the end makes life show grim as we look forward. But look back instead of looking forward; just compare the performances of the past with the high-flown expectations with which you started, and perhaps you will heave a sigh of thankfulness, that endurance is required, and nothing more. It would have seemed a poor all to begin with, to you "the undefeated that should be." But ask now what hope there would have been, had you been called on to do more than endure. We may all, then, be grateful to the text for the secret of endurance which it tells us in that fragment from an old-world experience:—"As seeing the Unseen One, he held out." Sight he had not and he could not have: we none of us have it in this life;—but then he

held out as though he saw. Not seeing, to hold out as though we saw: yes, there is the secret, there the rub. Can we respond to this demand, so stern and searching? Can we walk thus by faith, not by sight? Can we endure through the commonplace seasons, as though "the vision and the glory and the dream" were the normal condition of the Christian warfare, not gleams thrown now and then for our encouragement?

Nothing short of such endurance will avail us: for in this lies the gist of our probation, that it is a walking by faith, and not by sight. This, indeed, is the whole meaning of faith—"the substantial realisation of things unseen;" the treating of the world within the veil as being infinitely more real than what we see. First, our grasp on the verities of the Gospel must be matter of endurance to us all; of endurance which does not see; nay, which knows that it never can see, while the mists of time and of this world lie between us and the things of eternity; endurance which does not see, but which holds out as though it saw. Only He Who lays this burden upon us can tell the endurance which it often calls for. But, blessed be His Name, He

does know, knows the agony of the over-strained sense, as it strives to gain for a moment that actual vision of the Unseen which should make faith unnecessary for the future. But no, it may not be: we must walk by faith, not by sight: that is the law of our earthly probation. The darkness into which we strain our gaze may be silvered, as it were, for a moment, but it is "as seeing the Unseen One," that we must hold out.

And, however it may have been in other ages—about which I have my own opinion—at least this does mean endurance to-day.

On some, at any rate, among us, the contemptuous patronage of the world makes a certain demand for endurance. To be regarded as an amiable enthusiast, more able perhaps to reach the masses from the very weakness of sharing their superstitions—to be treated thus by many of the most cultivated, and to hold on, content to be so regarded; not to offer scorn for scorn, not to be betrayed into a single bitter word; to be despised and to be willing to be despised; to accept the fact that one must be so despised, if the disciple is to be as his Master—this does make

some call for endurance; this presupposes a hold upon the Invisible, which is only possible if, in spite of not seeing, you live as though you saw. And when the scorn of the world has done its worst, there rises up a yet deadlier enemy, in a certain inward half-contempt for yourself:—Putting up with a half-certainty to the end—so begins the taunting voice—putting up with a half-certainty to the end, about the things which concern you most deeply? bowing down to a problematical Deity, with a worship which believes itself to be real, offered up on evidence half conclusive, to that which is not proved to exist? *As though* you saw—very true, it goes on; but suppose that you discover one day that *as though* is an insufficient nourishment for the most imperative cravings of your inner self? Thus the changes are rung by the inward scorner who goes with you wherever you go because you never can escape from yourself. And you begin to ask, is it indeed as though I saw? does my life bear out the great pretension? was that moment of weakness or of base compliance a carrying out of the character which I profess? or, where was the seeing of the Unseen One when the lassitude of that other

moment got the better of me? A thousand times, it may be, in a single year, it seems as though, under the stress of such questionings, endurance must at last give way. Can I go on? you ask bitterly of yourself; will next year find me still holding out? And next year comes, and the next, and somehow, you cannot tell how, the Rock of Ages is still beneath your feet. You have endured, and that was all that was required of you.

"He held out, as seeing Him Who is invisible." Apply the thought in another direction. There is one fact, the grimmest in life, which is also perhaps the most inevitable—the fact that we are called upon to suffer. Suffering ushered every one of us into the world; it will stand by to see most of us out of it. It lies in wait at every stage of the passage through it, refusing to be bound by truce or treaty, acknowledging no proprieties of time, recognising no rights of local sanctuary, treating nothing as too sacred for its handling, recognising no limit to its aggressiveness. Bring all helps, whether natural or supernatural, to minimise its dread power over our lives, and when all is done, there is no resource at the last, but to "hold out as seeing the Unseen One."

Nay, even so it will search our weaknesses to the quick.

Perhaps that which makes it hardest of all is that it has to be offered *as though* we saw; when all the time we know too well that we do not see. If I could but see the meaning of it all! If some ratio could somehow be found between what we know, or think we know, of our deservings and what we find in such bitter experience, of the meed which is actually dealt out to us. If we but knew!—and in this world we never shall. Or again, if we could see what it was leading up to!—could even see that in the immediate, or the remote future, it would be granted us to read its full meaning!

In some cases this is permitted; but not so that we must calculate upon it, not so that we should regard it as our due. As far as our wisdom extends, there are trials which seem simply to blight a life, to leave it bereft of the surroundings which alone could draw it out to its proper fulness. It is useless, in cases such as these, to think that we ever shall see—from the point of view to which this world confines us. We shall not; nor must we expect it.

But, then, what is it that is required of us? Not to see; not to blame ourselves for not seeing; not to acknowledge, here and here did I deserve it; not to forecast, to this and this it will lead me on. Not to see, but to hold out as though we saw;—crushed, perhaps; perhaps only not despairing; but clinging, crushed and shivering though we be, to the Cross of Him Who is out of sight. For therein lies the difference, and oh the difference! between the trial which is borne for His sake, and the trial which is endured, however nobly, without reference to the world of the Invisible;—that one begins and ends as mere trial, while the other is the bearing of the Cross.

But there is yet another phase of endurance which presupposes the vision of the Unseen One, and without which all is lost for every one of us. "Blessed," we are told, "is the man that endureth temptation; for when he has been approved, he shall receive the crown of life." Observe, not simply, "the man who is tempted," but, "the man who *endureth* temptation;" and not simply, "for he shall receive the crown," but "*when he has been approved,*" he shall receive it.

He must endure, and he must so endure as to be approved.

And I would have you mark what is involved in being tempted. For surely this is the thought that it carries with it,—to be searched by something which really appeals to us; not by the things which might overcome others; not by the things which, in general, are attractive; but by that which comes home to oneself with an appeal to one's own inner weaknesses. No prevalent surroundings of evil have power over us apart from this appeal. There are things against which we can hold out with no very special assistance; there are things of which we hardly understand how they come to be temptations at all. No grasp of the Invisible is needed to make us proof against the sins that "we have no mind to." But the bosom enemy which comes masked as your dearest friend; which whispers to you of old associations; which insinuates itself into your confidence before you realise that your Lord is being betrayed; of whose presence you first become aware when the very gates of the citadel are in its power—you are lapped in a feeling of security: peace, peace, everything whispers

around you : and of a sudden—*there*,—what is it that has come to you? You have passed into a phase of experience which you thought you had left behind you long ago : your higher self is borne down, is hardly struggling. You are longing for some shadow of a motive to disguise what you would fain be or do from the better judgment which you have schooled yourself to make final. With a half-wish that your better self were supreme, you are yet disposed to accept the inevitable —it is not, and it will not be, supreme.

"As though seeing the Unseen One, he held out." Well for you if, at a moment such as this, you can make that old experience your own. For, indeed, I know of no other way in which the balance can fairly be redressed when once it has dipped far in the wrong direction. Between you and the loved, loathed evil, I know of but One Presence which can interpose, so as to secure the victory for the higher self.

But how wondrously this comes to the rescue, let those say who have appealed to it at such a moment. Between them and the overmastering passion a crowned Presence has suddenly interposed, the crown of thorns interwoven with the

royal diadem. All seemed lost but a moment ago, and now what rises to the lips? "I can do all things in Christ enabling me." To quote the words of a great modern writer, "all the gathered spiritual force of painful years" which had seemed to vanish just when it was most needed, "comes in at the moment of extremity," to aid one who thus sees the Invisible One. We endure: for the first moment, that is all. The glamour may be still strong upon us. We may be able only, as it were, to cling on, to hold our breath until the wave shall have rolled over. But endure we can, and we do.

But, alas! it may, it does, often befall that we are hurried into some terrible compliance without ever thus gathering up our forces to invoke the invisible Succourer; that we only wake to the fact that we are being tempted, when, for this time, resistance is too late. And thereupon comes the miserable questioning, whether endurance is for us any more, whether the heavenly aid has been forfeited irrevocably, whether the vision of the unseen is quenched for ever.

Take courage! it may be utterly obscured; our whole being may have been borne down by one

COMMON-SENSE HUMILITY.

"For I say through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."—*Rom.* xii. 3.

The combination of lofty motives with common sense which comes out in this advice about humility is unsurpassed in even the writings of St. Paul. The opening words of the Epistle for today set before us the loftiest incentives by which a sinner can be exhorted to God's Service:—"I beseech you by the mercies of God"—by all that the previous chapters have set forth of the glorious work of redemption, wrought out by the sacrifice of the Cross—"I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye present you bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service." In other words, being sinners by nature, redeemed by the precious Blood of Jesus Christ, we are exhorted to keep back from His service no part of our composite being, but to render the service of our reason by offering up our bodies to our

Bombay Cathedral, 12th January 1890.

Redeemer. And this sacrifice is to separate us markedly from the ways and the standards all around us:—"and be not conformed to this world"—do not accept conventional ways of living as an adequate standard for yourselves—"but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds"—become gradually changed and renewed till you look at things altogether in a higher light—"that ye may discern what the will of God is, that will which is good, and well-pleasing, and perfect"—learn to bring yourselves into harmony with what is highest, until you are qualified by personal conformity to estimate the will of the highest in all that makes up its perfection.

Such a standard, uncompromising in its loftiness, supernatural in all its estimates and all its motives, is put before us in the verses which precede, as the rule by which a Christian must live. And then, at once, without gradual transition, the writer passes from the claims of the supernatural, from the altitude of Christ's claims on His redeemed, to the demands of the plainest common-sense for sobriety in our estimate of ourselves:—"for I say through the grace given to me, to each one that is among you not to think

of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think so as to think soberly, according as God has given to each a measure of faith."

No translation can bring out the point and pungency which belong to the exhortation in the original. But the general gist of the advice is, be sensible about yourselves, every one of you; do not pile up your estimate of yourself, but keep it down to the moderate level marked out by common-sense and good taste.

Who would think, unless he knew the New Testament, that the same writer, in the very same passage, could rise to such heights of exalted motive, and condescend to such levels of plain teaching, as we find side by side in this place.

I am not sure that the quiet self-restraint which is required for giving effect to this advice is not rarer than the exalted aspirations which respond to the teaching of the previous verses. It is the necessary sequence, no doubt, of a response to the great goodness of God, that we should learn to think lowly of ourselves. It is a good test of aspirations after holiness, whether they lead to a sober estimate of our own deficiencies. But there are sequences which it takes years to work

out fully, and there are tests which we can only learn to meet after the discipline of plentiful failures.

I propose, then, to look at this grace, so lovable, so necessary, and yet so rare, at this virtue of common-sense humility, and to put before you some of the hindrances to our attaining it, and some of the ways in which those hindrances may be encountered.

I suppose, then, that the great difficulty lies in this—that we estimate ourselves and other people by two quite different standards; that all our own shortcomings and faults, and all our own attainments and performances, are tried in a different balance from that in which we weigh other people's; that we excuse ourselves over our own faults, and hug ourselves over our own virtues, in a way which we should see to be quite ridiculous if we encountered it in anybody else. We are altogether too interesting to ourselves: we find a glamour, a sort of fascination, in that which concerns ourselves personally, which obscures our power of criticism and our sense of humour exactly where their exercise were most useful. Of course, when I speak of criticism of ourselves I do not mean that

it is not far better that we should cease to think of ourselves at all than that we should criticise ourselves ever so justly. But then the exhortation of the text is addressed to those who have not by nature that exquisite grace of simplicity which goes by a short cut of its own to the goal which others reach with so much effort. The advice to think soberly of ourselves takes for granted that we are inclined to think otherwise; that we must turn our eyes inwards and learn a lesson of humility from what we find there.

The first essential for estimating ourselves justly is to believe how difficult it is. It is one of the favourite devices of vanity to make us believe that we can estimate ourselves with the same "detachment" which we maintain towards others; whereas really we reserve all our tenderness to be lavished on our own faults and failings, and reserve all our sternness for other people's; we admire our own qualities or our own performances in utter blindness to the ridiculous partiality with which we entered on the task of self-criticism. We need to look out for every help that can come to us through the frankness or the involuntary disclosures of those

who estimate us from without, to assist us in detecting our own weaknesses. It is impossible "to see ourselves as others see us" without first ceasing to be ourselves. But if we are willing to be helped in this way, if we are not greedily on the watch for compliments, or morbidly sensitive to depreciation, we can learn much of how we strike other people, to help us to correct our own judgment. There have been those who have owed more than they could well estimate to even gross caricatures of themselves, put before them by unfriendly hands, but deriving the very sting which made them painful from the elements of truth which they embodied. But if we have taken in the difficulty of the task, we shall never be at a loss to find help in arriving at some estimate of ourselves less flattering than nature is prone to make it.

And, perhaps, next to looking for help from other people, there is nothing which can so assist us against vanity as to realise how ridiculous it makes one. A great deal of the grossest of self-love is often due to a deficient sense of humour, to an utter failure to discern that one is ridiculous And though it may be true that a general sense

of humour is a thing which must be born with one, not acquired, yet it is possible to be possessed of it for every subject except the one where it would be of most use to us. And so it may not be altogether superfluous to say to those who are inclined to be self-important, that if they could only apply to themselves the irresistible sense of the ludicrous which they often experience towards others, they would find that a vast wind-bag of self-complacency might often be pricked and reduced to nothing by just bidding oneself not be a fool.

I have tried to do justice thus far to the pure common-sense of the Apostle, to the epigram which pervades his advice to us. Let me dwell now on the deeper aspects of his teaching, and base a lesson of humility on what he says of our relations towards God.

"I beseech you by the mercies of God not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think soberly;"—so runs the exhortation to humility if you read both parts of it together. Think of yourself as a sinner ought to think, and a sinner, to whose profoundest sense of gratitude God's free pardon is always appeal-

ing. When self-complacency arises within you, just ask yourself, what have I to be proud of? Ask, what should I be at this moment if God had left me to myself? Then get down into the dust at His feet and thank Him for all that He has done for you.

How could we be complacent with ourselves, if we remembered that we owed everything to His mercy? We may know that there are vices and sins which have never been even a temptation to us. But surely we carry, each of us, within, some tendency which, left to its proper issues, would have landed us in that which we dare not think of. Who is it that, in regard to that one tendency, has come between you and your worst self? Can you say that you owe it to your own exertions that you have anything that you could dare to be proud of? Not, I think, if you have realised in the least the ruin that can be wrought in a character by one bad tendency unrestrained.

It is a part, then, and an integral part, of the sacrifice which we are to offer to God in return for His undeserved goodness, that we should maintain a humble attitude before Him. We cannot bring an acceptable offering, unless at

every moment of presenting it, we are genuinely conscious of our unworthiness. We must have the good will to be thus humble, and we must be learning to put it into practice. And perhaps there is no grace in the Christian character, where the distinction between willingness and performance is more marked than in the case of humility. We may have the general purpose for very long before we learn to put it into exercise. Our sober judgment may tell us quite plainly that we have cause to think little of ourselves, and yet in practice we may habitually contradict what we are ready to admit in the abstract. We may be terribly self-confident about ourselves, and absurdly over-sensitive towards others, long after we are convinced, in a certain fashion, that we have nothing, about which to be proud.

We must estimate ourselves, if we are really to be humble, by what we are in the sight of the all-Holy; must look at ourselves and our best performances as we appear when tried by His standard. All that we find of good in ourselves, we owe unreservedly to Him; all that we find of unworthy and unclean,—that is what we have contributed ourselves.

And if we would estimate ourselves rightly before Him, we must make this our sober judgment about ourselves, and we must accept it in its practical consequences. It is useless to pretend that we believe it, if in practice we resist all that can bring it home to us. If we are always alive to our dignity, and in love with what ministers to our self-importance, then, however we may profess to abase ourselves, we are really forgetting what we are. Almighty God is, in a sense, so far off that it is easy to be humble towards Him. The distance between the Infinite and the finite is so great that nothing can span it; that no self-abasement towards Him can go beyond simple matter of fact, which it would be folly to attempt to deny. Bnt when we come to our relations with our fellow-men, here we seem to have rights to insist upon : they at least are no better than ourselves, and why should we be humble towards them ?

But, believe me, that is no true humility which does but accept the inevitable by acknowledging itself to be nothing before God, and which forgets to carry out what it professes by bearing itself lowly towards others. To deserve nothing,—

that is what we profess. To ask everything in the way of estimation,—is not that what we practise too often? And how are we to reconcile the two? I know no way of really being humble, except to be willing to be little thought of, to be indifferent as to how we are thought of; and that, not with the kind of indifference which holds itself above being criticised, but with the indifference which realises so fully our indebtedness to the Author of all good, that it is unable to claim anything for itself, on which a lofty estimate could be founded.

Think soberly, then, of yourself—that is to say, see yourself as God sees you, as a sinner owing everything to Him—and you will need nothing more to make you humble in all your relations with other people. For it will be a portion of your offering of yourself to God, that you should think, when anything humbles you, that it is exactly what a sinner deserves.

Does this sound impossible or extravagant? Believe me, it is the simplest common-sense, and it is that which has been sensibly acted out by many good servants of God. It is difficult, very difficult, I allow. It takes years to learn the lesson in its fulness. But until we have in some

measure learnt it, until we have acknowledged that we ought to learn it, we are still at the very alphabet of the Gospel, have learnt nothing, as yet, as we ought to do. For until we have acknowledged the truth of it, we do not realise the mercies of God, by which we have been delivered from evil; are not offering body and spirit as a reasonable sacrifice to Him.

UNSELFISHNESS.

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."—*Philippians* ii. 4.

I spoke to you last Sunday evening on the subject of the imitation of Jesus Christ, about following Him always and in all things. To-night I take one special grace out of the many in which we have to copy Him: I am going to speak about the grace of unselfishness.

First, a word about its scope and opportunities, as they present themselves to the majority among us.

There is no virtue which, in some of its manifestations, has a loftier flight or a wider range. It may rise to the sublimest self-devotion, may assume the most chivalrous forms, may have to move in the most romantic situations. But as far as we are most of us concerned, it consists chiefly in the application of great principles to essentially common-place details.

It is important that this should be impressed on us, because there are many who lead lives of

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daily selfishness, as regards every practical detail, who are yet capable of fine flights of imagination, in which they see themselves posing as the knight-errant, or moving about as the Lady-Bountiful. They fancy they only lack opportunity to perform deeds of lofty unselfishness; whereas, if they would but look around them, they would see that they are wasting, every day, opportunities which are none the less noble for being small in the range which they cover, and obscure in the sphere which they would fill.

Nothing ever can be really common-place which offers opportunities of self-sacrifice, of finding our personal happiness in endeavouring to make other people happy.

And the principal distinction, I think, between small opportunities and great ones is not that it is really more difficult to rise to the more striking ones, should they offer, but that the two different kinds of opportunities seem to appeal to different natures. To those who are largely ruled by imagination, the striking, exceptional occasion offers a stimulus to heroic self-sacrifice, which somehow was wanting at other times; while there are some who can plod on day by day, making

half-unconscious sacrifices of inclination, who yet might fail when a greater call was made upon them, because of the difficulty of rising to the situation, of taking in that they could really do great things. But we may safely lay it down as a working rule, that it is those only who form a habit of unselfishness by daily responding to little calls, who will rise to a greater occasion, should Providence place one in their way. And one might add that, in some ways at least, it is more difficult to persevere in trifling sacrifices than to rise to more showy occasions, where imagination comes in to our assistance, and we are stimulated by the consciousness of being watched. When no motives but duty and affection are present to stimulate us to self-sacrifice, we must have the principle deeply implanted in us, if we are to rise to our daily little calls. Failing this, they pass unrecognised. Granted this, they become a part of the day's work, and are responded to almost without our knowing it. Then, perhaps, comes some greater call upon us, a call which we recognise as more heroic; and probably our capability of responding will be proportioned,

with tolerable exactness, to our faithfulness "in that which is least."

We may take this, then, as the foundation of all that follows;—be unselfish in the trifles of daily intercourse; opportunities more heroic, as you would call them, may never be vouchsafed to you at all; if they are, you will probably not rise to them unless have first trained yourself in little things.

But if the details of unselfishness are commonplace, its principles may always be heroic. Nay, they never can be other than heroic, if our unselfishness be of the true christian sort. For unselfishness, like every other christian grace, means the daily imitation of Jesus Christ, carried out through the assistance of His grace.

In giving up, our own way, then, for other people, or in undertaking what other people shrink from, or in all the innumerable little ways in which we may minister to happiness, if only we look out for opportunities, we must remember that the smallness of the occasion makes no difference to the grandeur of the motive. We need not be figuring before ourselves, and admiring ourselves for the loftiness

of our ideals; but we must habituate ourselves to bring great motives to bear, until they move us by pure habituation without our ever thinking twice about the matter. They must be there, working quietly below the surface; the less consciously present to us, perhaps, because they are so deeply engrained. For, indeed, the unselfishness of which I speak must be the growth of a solid principle of Christliness, founded deep on the sense of forgiveness, and worked out by daily communing with the Saviour. There must be first the giving up of ourselves to Him, to be forgiven and guided and sanctified; and then we shall begin to ask instinctively how much we can do for other people. We must be regarding our neighbours as fellow-sinners, redeemed by the same Saviour as ourselves: we must be thinking of them as either actually, or at least possibly, partakers in a common forgiveness and participators in a common sanctification; and then the ties which grow out of these deep sympathies will unite us so closely with those about us that their happiness will become to us as our own, and we shall labour for it because we cannot help it.

And herein lies the answer, as I think, to certain perplexities and paradoxes which people are fond of spinning around this subject. Some will tell us that there is no such thing as unselfishness, that we all seek enjoyment for ourselves, and that the only difference between selfishness and unselfishness, in the accepted use of the terms, is that some find enjoyment to themselves in promoting the enjoyment of others, while none the less it is their own proper pleasure which they are seeking and securing all the time. I do not care to go deeply into such questions, which belong rather to the schools than to the pulpit. I will only say that the true solution is to be found in refusing to draw any such distinctions; that those who find pleasure to themselves in the enjoyment of seeing other people happy are just the unselfish people that we are speaking of; that these have acquired the habit of mind which is the Christ-like thing for us to aim at. Let the difference be, if you will, not so much in the object that is sought as in the means of attaining the object; grant fully that we all seek enjoyment;—and then we get our definition of unselfishness in its being just the habit of mind which secures that

what gives us enjoyment shall be promoting the happiness of others. Learn to find your enjoyment in this, and then you are truly unselfish.

And this suggests two characteristics which distinguish all christian unselfishness;—the first, that it is always far-seeing, and the next that it never can be indolent. It must always, I say, be far-seeing, must look forward to what will help people, in the long run, to rise to the highest kind of happiness. And then it must never be indolent: it must not give people their own way for the moment, just because it is easier and more obvious to indulge them with an immediate gratification than to contradict them for their ultimate welfare. Let me draw out each of these into some detail.

It is an essential of Christian unselfishness that it should think of people's ultimate well-being, as distinguished from their enjoyment at the moment. How often does mere short-sighted folly, masquerade under the guise of true unselfishness;—taking trouble to give people pleasure, regardless of the paramount consideration that

by doing so it is storing up evil, to come upon them when the pleasure is over. We see children not guided or kept right; because the blindness of their parents' affection thinks only of their enjoyment at the moment; does not ask whether their characters are suffering for want of the inculcation of self-control. To let them have what they want is the only thought,—as if having what we want were the real happiness, instead of learning to use what we have, and to do without what it is better for us to want!—as if anything that we possibly could have, possessed any real value at all except so far as it helps to build us up in loftiness of character and purpose!

All this is as unlike real unselfishness as the determination to make everybody comfortable, regardless of their moral deservings, is unlike the crowning grace of christian charity, under whose name it so frequently masquerades.

And if unselfishness can never be short-sighted, so neither can it be indolently acquiescent: it cannot grant people everything that they ask, just because it is less trouble to grant it than we know that it would be to refuse it. It must not meet the world on a lower

platform, to save the trouble of pointing it to a higher. We dare not claim to be truly unselfish, if we are always good-naturedly acquiescent, when we see that the standard all around us wants raising and bracing and ennobling. And there are circumstances, when plain speaking about right and wrong is an imperative duty to every one of us; though we may know that to look on and say nothing is what would make us universally popular. It is one thing to be meddling and officious, and quite another to be outspoken at the proper moment. And it is one thing to be delicately reticent, and quite another to become partner in evil because we ought to have protested and did not.

And here the dilemma of which I spoke may become most practical and real. We are all bound to ask ourselves sometimes, whether we are promoting or allowing some enjoyment, just because it is less trouble to ourselves to see others enjoying themselves wrongly than to stand up and let them know that they are wrong. Here, indeed, we may be finding our own pleasure in that which pleases other people, and be doing it most selfishly and wrongly—

not because of the pleasure that it gives us, but because of the harm it does them? Here we ought to take ourselves to task, and to enquire whether our love of giving pleasure be not only a refined form of selfishness.

And this leads to the next point that I would put before you:—that if we lay out our lives for other people, we shall have much to give up and much to bear. We may find our highest happiness in it: indeed, once tasted, the life of unselfishness brings a happiness perfectly incomparable. But it is a happiness which can only be attained to by a pretty ruthless sacrifice of inclination;—so much so, that we may have to ask from time to time, whether this exercise of giving up our own way is not left to be its own reward.

I do not mean that it is surprising or paradoxical that such should be the case. Look well into it and you will find that it is not so. But then we start with such high-flown conceptions that they need to be brought down to reality. We have to learn that discomfort is discomfort, though we undergo it to relieve someone else; that the mere nobility of our purpose

mean gratitude and admiration on other people's part; and we find that misunderstanding or ingratitude are all that we encounter for our trouble. Or, worse still, perhaps candour has to acknowledge that our own mistakes, our want of tact or of experience, have made acts which we meant to be unselfish take a character of total ungraciousness in the eyes of the very persons we meant to benefit. Or we learn, with deepening self-knowledge, that a sad alloy of subtil self-seeking, of vanity, of a desire to be thought well of, or at least to stand well with ourselves, is what accounts for the mistakes and the want of tact.

And then comes the wretched, stranded feeling of having embarked the best capital of our lives in an undertaking, the meaning of which we were very far from understanding when we started.

These lessons, so humiliating and so distasteful, come to all of us, I suppose, with middle life, if we have started with lofty ideals, and tried to fulfil them in practice. The fine gold, we are apt to say, has become dim, and life, where it seemed to offer the highest promise, has proved

but a noble disappointment—happy we, if we can indeed say, a noble one.

But, believe me, to give way to such a feeling is only to turn your back once for all on everything that makes up true nobility. To accept your own mistakes and your mixed motives, to make the best of other people's irresponsiveness, to face facts in their grimmest reality, and then to rise superior to them all;—to find Christ in the midst of disappointment, to see Him in the depths of your own failures, to go on to the end with the same objects, turning failures, disappointments, disillusionments into occasions of purging your own motives, getting rid of your vanities and your self-deceits;—to plod on while the daylight remains, never giving up though you may flag and even falter—here, here is your reward to be found, found more surely for all the disappointments which bring you more into conformity to your great Model.

What failure of all the failures that ever were has seemed so utter, or so crushing as His did?

Three years of miracles and of teaching, three years of going about doing good, three years of unselfish devotion, and then—to be crucified by

those He loved! Whereas we, for the most part at least, find that the world in which our sacrifices are made is on the whole a responsive world; that though sometimes we are misunderstood, yet on the whole

"I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
With coldness still returning
Alas! the gratitude of men
Hasoftener left me mourning."

And after all, when we sum up our own performances, and set failures over against successes, do we not find that what stamps us for what we are is the motive, the general intention, with which this chequered life has been lived?

"Then welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids, nor sit, nor stand, but go!
Our joy be three parts pain!
Strive and hold cheap the strain;
Learn nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe.
For, thence—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale."

Yes, my friends, in sober prose, it is just everything to have started with high ideals, and to have tried, however falteringly, to act them out. You might have attained, had you been content with a lower aim: you have striven high, and hence the sense of failure.

Take the comparative failure as your highest guerdon. You have had Christ for your Model and for your Helper: be it honour *enough* for poor you to have come short of what He set before you.

THE LIMITATIONS OF EARTHLY PERFECTION.

"I have seen an end of all perfection. Thy Commandment is exceeding broad."—*Psalm* cxix. 96.

"I have seen an end of all perfection."—The words are those of no cynical worldling, depreciating what he has ceased to enjoy: they express the deliberate conviction of a good man, who weighs all things in the balance of the other world, and assigns to them their proper importance in the light of their bearing on the higher life. He has attentively considered human life, and has read in it perfections of many kinds—things perfect as far as they go, things perfect in their human relations, with a beauty, a suitability to human needs, a power of drawing out what is highest in life as it is lived in this world. And having read them and tested them and enjoyed them, as a good man can enjoy the gifts of God, he brings them all to be tried by a higher standard, and then pronounces this verdict upon them:—to all perfection I have seen an end: I have found a point, up to which they have satisfied me, but I have found that, being crea-

Bombay Cathedral, June 4th. 1890.

turely and finite, they are limited in all that they offer. And, then, having thus given fair-play to the perfectness which belongs to them as creatures, he brings them all into comparison, or into contrast with what belongs to a higher order of being :—" To all perfection I have seen an end. Thy Commandment is exceeding broad."

I dwell on the absence of cynical depreciation in this estimate of the value of things earthly, because it makes the whole difference to our acceptance of it to be assured that in the writer's experience they were being put to the fairest of tests. If a man begin by caring only for the things of earth, by expecting what they were not meant to give him, by forgetting the very existence of higher things in his passionate pursuit of what is lower, then very often, by a natural reaction, he ends by estimating them most unfairly, because they fail to bear up under a strain which it was never intended that they should endure. It is the man who has used them in the proper way, who has regarded them all his life long as possessing a perfection of their own, and yet as being perfect but as creatures; it is the man

who has used them as stepping-stones for ascending to something higher than themselves, who can fairly claim to have looked at them all round, to have seen them under their proper relations, and to be able to bear witness to what they are when they are tried by the ultimate test. And here is his ultimate test :—" Thy Commandment is exceeding broad." He has found something which cannot be exhausted, because it is the reflection of the Infinite ; something which enters into the arena of human life and competes with all " perfection," as perfection is displayed in things earthly. And the verdict which he passes on the competition is that the breadth, the embraciugness of this stands out as something not to be exhausted, beside things which, perfections in their measure, are found, as it is not, to have a limit.

The discovery may be as old as human nature, yet it is fresh in the experience of every day. It might have been meditated out quite completely when the Pyramids were rising stone by stone. Yet this but means that it will have to be re-discovered, assimilated, made their own, by those who may be living hereafter when the

fabric of our own civilisation may have crumbled like that of the Pharaohs. It is the elemental experiences of humanity which come with a kind of shock to every one of us, when they pass from being commonplaces in our mouths to being factors in that complicated whole which makes up our personal life.

And therefore, on this first Sunday after Trinity, I have thought that this age-long lesson might come home to some hearts among ourselves. We have gone the round of the special lessons of Christ's Life, have looked afresh at His work for the world under the aspect of each stage in our Redemption, brought before us by the Seasons of the Church's Year, and now, for the six months till next Advent, we are left to the diverse application of these inexhaustible treasures of wisdom.

I take, then, this most general of applications, and proceed to apply it, one by one, to a few of those "perfections" of human life, about which we have to learn, every one of us, just how far they can carry us towards perfectness, and just where they leave us in the last resort—face to face with that test of all per-

fection, the Commandment which is "exceeding broad."

The verdict, to anticipate, must be this—that the perfection of each choicest experience, of each of those moments of enjoyment which come to us through the highest human channels, the perfection of heart and of brain, the perfection of home and of society, the perfection of art and of nature, must be tested by this one single trial —how far did they leave us more open to the influx of impulses from above? How far did our perfection as God's beloved ones receive increment or detriment from them? How far did they hinder us or enable us for entering with full zest and full ardour on the breadth of what God set before us? How far, in fact, did their limited perfectness place us in contact with Infinite Perfection and assist us towards communing with it?

I begin with that which, I think, in the present day, is the most delicate subject to handle —"To all" *intellectual* "perfection I have seen an end: Thy Commandment is exceeding broad."

All things issue in mystery—*omnia exeunt in*

mysterium—so wrote a well known thinker, as the result of his philosophical speculations. All things issue in mystery—that is to say, along every line of thought, as the residuum of every analysis, at the groundwork of every speculation, you encounter certain ultimate facts, beyond which advance is impossible.

"I have no concern with reasons: I give you invariable facts;"—along one glorious line of investigation, the way of natural science, you encounter this as the last word of every teacher. *Why* the facts are as they are, about this we have nothing to say: but the great principle that observed invariability gives a groundwork for assured generalisation—on this as an ultimate principle we rest without seeking to explain farther.

Carry knowledge, then, to the farthest point of detail; follow out the patent facts of the senses to the last and highest generalisation which the minutest research can bring to bear; and you find that the issue is this—what has been we believe will be again, if the conditions are genuinely repeated. But the whence and the whither of Nature; what it was that set the sequences in motion, which we have tracked into

their ultimate invariability; the origin of the irreducible atoms into which we have analysed all things; the fountain of the single force, modes of which seem to account for every process;—about these, when all is said and done, we know exactly as little as before.

On the side, then, of physical research, we have seen an end to all perfection, have found how much can be told us about the origin and the destiny of all things. And the issue comes roundly to this—that if there be anything to be known, we have at least no materials for investigating it, perhaps no faculties for apprehending it.

We come back to the question of questions—is there anything which comes in from another region to clear up this insoluble perplexity? "From beyond the flaming ramparts of the world," as the Stoics phrased it of old, does there come any actual revelation to give a clue where the path disappears?

The ground is clear, at any rate, for it to come in. If it have any claim on our attention, at least its most formidable competitor is eager to declare itself no rival. It may question the

pretensions of Revelation, but at least it sets up nothing against them. It is eager to disclaim for itself what we claim for the province of Revelation, a something beyond sequences and facts—an account of the *why* of the Universe. Within the breadth of God's Commandment that *why* finds a place and an answer:—"Thou hast created all things: and for Thy Pleasure they are, and were created."

It does not come within the scope of my subject to argue out the claim of Revelation to have come in with a real message, not a feigned one, where research retires from informing us and acknowledges that her mission is fulfilled. My task this evening is an humbler one. There are those who believe in Revelation, and who appreciate, as who does not appreciate that has any comprehension of what it means? the "perfection" of scientific investigation, the glories of positive knowledge with which it has expanded our horizon. My task is but to say to such as these, see to it that you recognise the limitations which hedge round the highest human attainments. Be watchful and sedulously on your guard that all the grandeur of enlarged apprehension do but

lead to a more tender appreciation of the paramount claims of heavenly things to the best of our time and our attention. There are those whose bent is towards science, who are fascinated by the wonders it reveals to us, and who are disposed to set aside any question to which it does not profess to give an answer.

And on those I would press but this one question:—whether it is not worth a sensible man's while, whether it be not the deepest interest which attaches to a wise man's life, to ascertain with all the certainty possible, whether the clue is taken up by Revelation at the point where it is dropped by science; whether that ultimate of the Universe is a problem which cannot be solved, or whether an answer is not found to it in a law of which we, human beings, are the responsible rational servants. Most assuredly, if there be such a law, and if that law has been revealed by its Author, there is nothing which can impress it more deeply, can bring home its great sanctions more impressively than the sight of that limited perfection which attaches to the deepest human knowledge, the frank confession of science at her deepest, that she does but tell

us *how* things are constituted, that their *why*, their final cause, lies beyond her.

But the perfection and the glory of science appeals but to a limited circle. Let us apply the principle which we are handling to something whose appeal is more universal.

"To the perfection" of happiness "I have seen an end: Thy Commandment is exceeding broad."

There is to me a constant element of awe about the highest of happiness in this world: it depends to such a terrible nicety on exact combinations of conditions, any of which may be altered at any moment. There are periods, I suppose, in many lives, when the conditions of even great happiness do not include close personal ties; when energies successfully directed are self-sufficing for almost perfect enjoyment. Yet even so the exact poise of health and circumstances which gives play to this buoyant activity is an appallingly delicate combination on which to rest one's fabric of happiness.

And during all the choicest years of most lives the conditions of happiness are more complex: the exertion of one's own native

energies, under the most favourable circumstances possible, fails to furnish complete satisfaction apart from the life of the affections.

And here the balance, so delicate before, learns to dip in all possible directions—the more sensitive to causes of disturbance, the wider be the circle of our interests. I suppose that no one who has tasted the tender blessedness which belongs to the life of a happy home would for a moment surrender its bliss for the sake of being exempt from the risks which the very intensity of its affections carries with it. Yet here, if anywhere, it is that we learn to see the "end of perfection," the limitations, the possible severings, the counterbalancing cares and anxieties which beset "all perfection" in things human. That life should look dark or look bright with the application or the idleness of a single school boy; that on the reading of a clinical thermometer should depend your rest or unrest for days or weeks together; that on the permanence of a single frail life the completeness of your own should depend, should depend to such a degree that to live on without it or apart from it is not to be called living at all, these are facts

that have simply to be faced when you stake your all for this world on the "perfection" of domestic happiness. To this perfection we see too plainly that there is an end. From this, the most satisfying ideal that life in this world has to offer, we turn for the repose of security to that Commandment which is exceeding broad—turn to find how the best of this world is included as a part in the whole, within the scope of that widest of Commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself."

Take domestic affection apart from this, let it supplant any portion of this, and it remains with all the nakedness of its risks to be set off against the richness of its enjoyments. But take it as part and parcel of the higher law; take expansion of your affections which it brings with it, and let that be drawn out on every side, into deepened tenderness in your relations with your God, into wider sympathy in your relations with your fellow-men, and at once you lift all to a higher platform, where the floods of misfortune cannot reach it. Let all be swept away at a single blow, and it

will not be for nothing that you have enjoyed them, if you have taken them, all the time that you had them, as expanding your capacities for something higher. They are gone, let it be supposed, beyond recall of their perfection; you have so piteously seen an end that it almost seems as though all that remained to you was the added capability of suffering. Not so, if you look at them aright as included within the infinite scope of the "exceeding broad" ordering of God. That you have had them, that living in and for them you attained to an expansiveness, a power of sympathy, to which otherwise you must have been a stranger; that having had them you should have furnished to your Heavenly Father even this last test of your affection, whether you can trust Him and love Him after losing them—these are part of that breadth of God's Commandment which you set off, if you look at things with the Psalmist, against the limitedness of human perfection.

One more application of the same principle. Our own ideals—how perfect, yet how attainable they appear at the outset of life. No failures at any rate for us! we have set before us what

attainment is to be; carrying it out is but a matter of detail. Alas for the torn sails and the strained cordage with which this voyage is too often concluded! Alas for the second best, or the third best, to which most of us so readily descend—to say nothing of the wrecks and the collapses in which it is no question of what is best, but simply of what in practice we settle down to. Are we inclined to accept a cynical conclusion, to think that to have started with lofty notions meant only to have courted certain failure? Are we apt to give a warning to the inexperienced, to be content with the most common-place notions as the only ones that are likely to be carried out? Then let us ask if it be not really preferable to have found the limitations of perfection, than never to have set it before us; whether, even now, if we humbly accept failure, there is not scope for our very breaks-down within the "width" of the Commandments of God. In the experience of every individual His law must serve something of the same purpose as it served in the history of the race; it must furnish a test for our failures, as well as an ideal for our aspirations.

And, blessed for ever be His Name, where our best of endeavours has broken down, the width of the Commandments of God has included a Sacrifice for our sins as well as a standard for our performances.

Very soon, very humblingly, very ruefully may we have seen to the end of our own perfections. Very grudgingly, perhaps, may we have admitted that failure was the only thing to save us when we were ruining ourselves through our pride. But this once admitted and acted on, forgiveness once sought for what is best, as well as for what is worst in our lives, we are embraced, dwarfed, lost, swallowed up in the breadth of the saving Commandment which includes its own fulfilment in the Person of the Saviour Jesus Christ.

Of my imperfections I see no end—but Thy Salvation is exceeding broad.

GOD'S GIFT OF GREAT MEN TO HIS CHURCH.

"And they glorified God in me."—*Galatians* i. 24.

Great men and the helpfulness of their example, all that comes to us, collectively and individually, through the influence of eminent personality, the greatness and the limitations of the assistance which contact with saintliness can bring with it—these thoughts, or thoughts kindred to these, are what I wish to bring before you this evening.

For, indeed, if I had to give you a definition of what I deem God's best gifts to His Church, I know not how I could name one so inestimable as the power which some overmastering personality can exercise over the souls of lesser men. Like all gifts save His gift of Himself when He bestows Himself directly in His grace, this gift of what others can do for us has, of course, its limitations, even its dangers. Of these I shall say a word in their proper place. But the blessing of having known, or of having known of, great saints and their work in the world is the theme which I wish mainly to bring before you.

Rajkote, January 26, *and Disa, September* 21, 1890.

Just think, first, how Christianity itself is the history of God's employment of human nature to effect the redemption of our race; how He Himself, when He would bestow upon the world a new start, a new relation to Himself, chose to effect both the Sacrifice and the Exemplar by using our own nature for the purpose.

How He might have effected it otherwise—of this we know nothing and can know nothing. But we do know that God became Man, that as Man He might redeem and might instruct us: we do know that a Human Example has shown us in the Person of Jesus Christ what we may be, and what God would have us be. Quite alone, quite unique, unapproachable, incapable of repetition, nay of rivalry, the work of God-made-Man must stand out through time and to eternity; because only by God-made-Man could the Sacrifice be offered at all, and only by God-made-Man could the Example be set in perfection. But the Sacrifice and the Example alike made a starting point for a totally new development in the story of mankind in this world; and all the greatness and all the saintliness of which I speak are but the out-

come, the ever new presentation to us of what Jesus effected and set to work. Human Nature was used once for all to be the shrine of God's tabernacling among us, to be the Offering and the Offerer, alike, of the sacrifice that brought us to the Father, and therein we have the germ and the explanation of all that has been effected ever since, to draw each of us nearer to God by the helpfulness which can come to us through His saints.

For, indeed, in this lies the very core of that helpfulness—that everyone of the worthies of Christendom, every life which has served as a great example, every death which has crowned such a life, is but a visible embodiment before our eyes of the power of the invisible Saviour, of the indwelling of the Spirit whom He sends.

Thus and thus has Jesus Christ fashioned characters—thus and thus has the power of the Holy Ghost become manifest in concrete example—it is this that we can learn for our own assistance, when we witness, or when we hear of saintly lives.

Nay, more than this, since Almighty God has so willed it that, apart from supernatural in-

fluences, we so marvellously act upon one another; since character is moulded by character through sympathy as well as through example, the influence which is exercised upon the world by the presence of saintliness among us is nothing less than a kind of sacrament of Himself. For just as in the actual Sacraments He uses the common elements of daily life, and imparts to them something of the supernatural, makes them means of Himself drawing near to us, so here He uses that which is highest, which has the nearest affinity to Himself of all things that we know in this world, He uses humanity itself to be a channel through which to approach us. God dwelling and working in His holy ones—dare we say that it is anything less than this which so wondrously strengthens and helps us in the lives or the words of the saints? Surely, I do not go beyond sober truth when I say that this is really the case. For if we know of our own lives and the lives of others that all that is best in them personally is not ours, but is wrought in us by God, if we know that by the power of His grace He enables us to think and act aright, if we are sensible of stirrings within us which

nature never prompted or could prompt, if we know of good intentions implanted by the preventing grace of God, and of aspirations wrought out to good effect by that same grace following and enabling us, then why should we hesitate to say that the same power which works in us individually can also work on others through us? Is it not so that some lives that we know leave all with whom they ever come in contact more holy, more Christ-like than they found them? And dare we say that all this has been effected by anything else than by an actual manifestation of the power of God Himself as He indwelt and informed these characters? When we say that our fellows have helped us Godwards, are we not saying, virtually and in effect, that through others the Hand of God Himself has been stretched out to assist us and draw us upwards.

I am speaking now of sheer personal influence, of something which, in a certain sense at any rate, is distinguishable from saintly example; of what we do not so much see in other people, and then set ourselves deliberately to aspire to; but rather what we feel in a man's life reaching out to us and taking hold of us and changing us till

we learn from him, we hardly know how, to be liker him and liker Christ than we have been. It is this which gives the influence of goodness that character, almost, of a sacrament, about which I spoke just now—that, to repeat, it is not something which we observe and then set ourselves deliberately to carry out, but is something even more than that could be, a something which takes hold of us half involuntarily, which we assimilate rather than copy, which rather grows up within ourselves and becomes an actual element in our character than abides in our memory and our admiration to be exercised from time to time when we reflect on it.

Such an influence may come to us directly when we have known the person who exercised it, and have had a personal affection for the character—a higher form of that celebrated influence which was so exquisitely described in the last century, when it was said of a noble lady that "to have loved her was a liberal education." Or it may come to a whole generation, as it is radiated through a larger and larger circle by those who have been in actual contact with it.

People carry with them the impress of a noble character, and pass it on in a secondary degree to those to whom the person who exercised it has never been an actual living presence. You feel it through the medium of other people, and it tells on you without your having known it by personal contact with the living man.

But besides this half involuntary assimilation, by which you drink in the power of a great character, there is the blessing which reflection brings to you, as you think over the living embodiment of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the midst of the struggles and the discouragements which beset your personal life, it is something wonderful to read in another what the power of the Holy Spirit can effect. Is there anyone who is in earnest in what is good, who has not been tempted now and then to feel despairing about progress in holiness? to feel as though the efforts of a lifetime were failing to bring about the good effects which have sometimes seemed so certain and so near? to have asked if it was a dream and an unreality to set a goal of attainment before one, and believe that God would help one to reach it? Is it not true that if one's standard

has grown higher, the very alteration of the point of view, the very advance that has been vouchsafed to one's efforts, makes the goal seem more distant than ever? Or, again, if one has been conscious of unfaithfulness, of having failed to correspond to God's grace: if, without abandoning all effort, one has yet come far short of what one might be, then who does not know what it means to be tempted to disbelieve in God's grace, to discount the possibilities of goodness in order to excuse one's own failures?

And then comes the marvellous help which the example of Saintliness can afford one. You see the good, but you despair of attaining to it: or you are disposed to be depreciatory of goodness, because you know that you have not striven after it as you know that you ought to have striven: then see before your eyes in very fact, what God can help His servants to be when they surrender themselves completely to His guidance. Ask yourself to acknowledge with all honesty what it is that makes you different from God's Saints. If you see the good and despair of it, then ask yourself if that grace is grudged to you which has enabled another to attain where you have

but gazed and aspired. If you are tempted to pessimistic disbelief in what you once clearly saw to be possible, then read the refutation of your pessimism in that which another has become.

New belief in the reality of God's grace, and new confidence in the possibilities of human nature when that grace has been at work to transform it—these two quite inestimable beliefs may come to each of us through the power of great examples.

And yet, as I said to begin with, this blessing, like all other blessings which come to us through any human channel, has its own limitations, nay, its dangers.

I say, first, it has its proper limitations. There is, and there can be but one Exemplar which is of absolutely universal applicability, the Example of our Lord Jesus Christ. That one Character alone, of all Humanity, touches all of us at every point. The very strong points of other examples may be just what prevents them from coming home to us. We may feel of any one other character that it moves in a plane all its own, quite apart from our duties and our temptations; with other aims, other ideals, other

difficulties than those with which we can be conversant. It may be cast in a stern, ascetic mould; while we ourselves, if we are ever to be worth anything, must seek every means which God gives us for drawing out in their fullest developments the tenderer aspects of life. Or its strength may have lain in commanding; while our lot is always to obey. Or sympathy, the power of reaching others, may have been that wherein it shone with such tender brightness; while we may have only to be too thankful if we succeed in not jarring upon our neighbours. Or in a thousand different ways which will readily occur to every one of you, we may feel that an impenetrable barrier shuts us off from even dreaming in our brightest moments, of being like what we so fervently admire; may even feel that aspirations in that direction would be harmful to us instead of being helpful.

There are limitations, then, and strict limitations, limitations to be transgressed at our peril, to the helpfulness that can come to any one of us from the holiest of merely human examples.

Nay there are positive dangers to be encountered if we follow any such too blindly, without allowing for circumstances and idiosyncrasies. I have known serious harm to result where people tried in mere blind admiration to follow any single example in a spirit of indiscriminating hero-worship.

What every great example must do for us is to recall us to the One single Type which never can be worshipped too blindly, and never can be followed too literally. Nay, this is what every saint of God would alone wish to do for his brethren. If he were bold to say, with St. Paul, "be ye followers of me," he would add in the same breath, as St. Paul did, "as I am, of Christ."

You will perhaps be at no loss, my dear brethren, to divine why this special subject has been chosen for our reflections this evening. Our Church has been deprived very lately of one whom to know was to love, and whom distantly to hear of was to respect—the saintly Bishop Lightfoot of Durham, a man of whom those who knew him best were at a loss to say how they most respected him, whether as scholar, or as diocesan, or as saint.

Of his inestimable services to sacred learning this perhaps is hardly the place to speak. I will say only that if future generations believe with an unhesitating confidence that the several books of the New Testament were written by those whose names they bear; that the Gospels are the Life of Jesus Christ as written by men who had known Him, or had conversed with those who knew Him; that the Epistles which claim to be apostolic were written by St. Paul and St. John and the others to whom we attribute them—if, I say, these things are believed by our children and by those who come after them, it will be due to no one man more than to Joseph Barber Lightfoot. For no one has done more eminent service in rolling back the modern assault which claimed to have discovered the fact that, with but four exceptions, these books were written in the second century, or possibly later than that. And these assaults were repelled by Bishop Lightfoot, not simply by denouncing the assailants as unorthodox impugners of Holy Writ, but by beating them in the field of fair argument, with the weapons of scholarly research.

Nor, again, can I dwell specially now on his greatness as Bishop of a Diocese. Yet it was wonderful how the shy Cambridge Professor, whose life had been spent among books, or in influencing those who loved books, should have exercised just the same power over colliers and labourers in the North as he had wielded over students at Cambridge; how the organisation and partition of a vast Diocese brought out new powers of administration in one who, until he became Bishop, had been a scholar and a thinker, not a ruler. Yet so it was in a pre-eminent degree. People said when he went to his Diocese:—'but surely you will still give us books,'—and he replied that that should be as God willed, and according as he had superfluous energy, that he had not taken a Diocese to neglect it, and that now the souls of men were his first care. Yet the books went on appearing—the most learned of them after he was Bishop.

And souls were taken hold of and turned round, and parishes were marked off and built up; a new Diocese was carved out of the old one and started with palace and endowment. The whole of his own revenues as Bishop were spent on the work of the Diocese, and the modest

scholar lived in the old palace on the profits that his writings brought in; surrounded, as of old, by young men, whom he trained for the work of the ministry, and trained at his own expense. While controversies raged in other places, his presence secured peace in his Diocese. When he reproved, men listened abashed, and when he sympathised, they felt that they had new strength.

And then came the crowning opportunity, in the gathering of Bishops at Lambeth. When he spoke we listened breathless, as his wonderful learning laid before us the last word that was to be said on any subject where the authority of the Church's practice, or the balanced weight of her oldest teachers had to be brought to the decision of a controversy. But when he dealt with the subject of subjects which had ever lain nearest to his heart, on means for the protection of innocence, on how vice might be made to hide its head, then we felt that, more than scholar, and more than ruler, we were listening to the words of a saint. Never, I think, has the awfulness of holiness when it confronted unholiness in all its majesty, been more deeply impressed upon my mind than in the burning utterances of the great

Bishop as he urged her duty on the Church. It was the last effort of an over-taxed frame, which broke down under the strain of that day. He said afterwards that he never recovered from it, but that he would not have purchased life by refraining. The break-down took place in a few months, and he never recovered strength to rule his Diocese, except as a mere flicker for a little while.

Of the hundreds who followed him to his grave, and of the thousands who mourn his loss throughout our Church—and not throughout our Church alone, but wherever Christ is named—there are many to whom the name of Bishop Lightfoot conveys little except the thought of great abilities devoted to the service of the Master. Yet even those, I venture to say, owe more to the saintliness of the character than even to the greatness of the learning. For learning does but rear up a scaffolding for the building which is founded upon character. He himself said even of Christian doctrine, that it was the scaffolding of Christianity, while the building was "a Person and a Life." What was said of the system itself as compared with the

Person of the Master, may be said, in its measure and degree, of the ability and the learning of the disciple as compared with what he was in Christ Jesus. To many, perhaps to most among us, even the covers of his books are unknown. We, perhaps, should not even understand if we were told what he did for the Church by all that sacred learning so values. But we all can understand very well when we are told that one has passed within the veil who embodied with the sweetest of attractiveness, and carried out with the robustest of force, the example bequeathed to us by Jesus Christ. You can all understand what I mean when I tell you from personal experience, of one who, if you were called upon to differ from him, and to express your difference plainly, made you feel by his imperturbable lovingness that he could not think bitterly of any one; made you ashamed that in your littleness and your ignorance you could not bear yourself with a tithe of the humility which so beautified his vast powers and attainments. You can understand when I speak of a simplicity which made the leader of the sacred learning of our day a very child in unassuming self-forgetfulness.

To have known him was a thing to thank God for, was to have learnt to read a new meaning into the names of some of the great Christian graces, to have had reason to take courage afresh as you saw that in the exigencies of your own day God's grace had resources, as of old, for supplying all the needs of His servants.

Appendix to Sermon.

This sermon was not originally written for the Cathedral. It was preached there, with a different ending, the first time the preacher was in Bombay after the death of the Rev. Dr. Liddon in September 1890.

The paragraphs referring to Dr. Liddon are added as an appendix.

The Church of England has been deprived very lately of one who was raised up by Almighty God to do Him signal service in her ranks,—Canon Liddon, the greatest preacher of our day, among those, at least, who used the English language.

It was my happiness to be admitted for some years to intimate relations with Dr. Liddon, and I have thought that a privilege such as this has made it possible that a few words on his life and

character might be helpful, if spoken to my brethren. To the world he was but the eloquent Canon, the man who first attracted the great audiences which now crowd under the Dome of St. Paul's even when others are to occupy its pulpit.

To those who had the happiness to know him best his eloquence was the inevitable outcome of his reverence for, and his nervous grasp of God's truth. There were many aspects under which such a man used to present himself to every one who knew him well;—the brilliant talker, whose inimitable epigrams used to flash out on every subject of the day, without effort as without premeditation; the tender, chivalrous friend, who could blaze out into the sternest indignation if an unworthy motive was imputed, or an unworthy action attributed to one whom he had honoured with his affection; the faithful counsellor, whose godly sagacity never failed you at a critical juncture, yet whose unflinching loyalty to your highest interests never spared you if he felt that you were wrong; the controversialist, so keen and yet so delicate, who never wrote one word about an opponent which christian courtesy would have wished to erase, yet the incisiveness of

whose relentless logic never left a weak point unsearched; the student, the depth of whose reading never hampered the lightness of his touch; the man of the world, who could always hold his own with the most brilliant society of his day, yet who never made a concession to that society when a principle of his religion was at stake;—in all these, and in many other aspects he was known to the inner circle of his intimates, and in some of them he was known to all England.

But the one aspect which took precedence of all the rest in the eyes of those who appreciated him, was another,—the explanation of all the rest,—he was in all things, and before all things, the man whose intense grasp on God's truth so pervaded his every thought and every word that you thought of him as the servant and the champion of God made manifest in the flesh.

That Jesus Christ, God-made-Man for our sakes, is present here and now within His Church, to transform into the very image of the Godhead every heart which will yield itself to Him;—it was a passionate devotion to this truth, a hold on its transforming, saving power, such as belongs but to a gifted soul now and again; it was a belief

that this truth and this alone can save men and can save society from destruction;—it was this which had so permeated his whole being that the keen, eager service of a life-time was the least that he could offer to the Divine Master. And it was the too intense realisation of this, and of the "woe is me" which lay upon him if he did not preach it, that made the keen, unresting spirit like a sword wearing out its own scabbard.

In devotion to that truth he lived: in its enforcement he wore himself out.

You could foretell that he was not destined to old age: the eager spirit was inadequately reinforced by a delicate, over-sensitive body. He took things too deeply to heart to allow him to enjoy length of days. Indeed, that was what sent home all his utterances so straight to the minds and hearts of his hearers;—that the whole man was so intensely thrown into them. Their directness was the measure of what they cost him, and they used to leave him worn out, often depressed: he parted with too much of himself in his determination to come home to other people.

Let me try, then, in a few parting words, to bring home to you the lesson of such a life, what

I feel to have been left to myself as the legacy of my deeply reverenced friend.

It is simply this;—Let what you know of God's Truth be regarded as the guide of your whole being; as that which can alone bring your practice into conformity to the Example of Jesus Christ.

There is a tendency in the very atmosphere of the present day to try and separate the Example of Jesus Christ from what we know about the truth of His Person; to regard it as matter of pure indifference whether we worship Him as the God of our adoration, whether we cling to Him as the Saviour of our souls, provided only we keep Him before us as One who has shown us how to live. It was to combating this terrible delusion that Dr. Liddon devoted his whole life.

None gloried with a more exulting enthusiasm in the unapproachable human perfection set before us in the Example of Jesus Christ: none lived in a lowlier imitation of the pattern bequeathed by the Divine Master. But the conviction which "haunted him like a passion," the belief, to the enforcement of which he gave up the whole energies of his being, was,

that only by submission to that Master, as the Divine Saviour Who descended to this world from the sphere of the unapproachable Godhead; that only by daily using of His grace, as of a constant communication of Himself, from where He sits at the right Hand of God; that only by taking Him at His word when He says, "Take my yoke upon you and *learn* of Me;" that only by adoring Him as God, can we truly learn to follow Him as Man.

I but appeal to the humility of your common-sense:—if you really grasp what that Example puts before you; if you take in the unapproachable glory of that Life which was lived upon earth by the Jesus Whom you profess to revere; if you have fairly compared yourself for one moment with His Character, as presented to you in the Gospels; then I ask how you dare to speak of copying it, apart from the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Given all the assistance of His grace; given full participation of His sacraments as making us partakers of that grace; given earnest, lifelong endeavour to commune with Him as bestower of the Spirit; given all that the greatest saints have enjoyed of direct communica-

tion from Himself of all that He died to bestow,—and we shall still toil after Him in vain as we strive to translate the Pattern into practice. Apart from these, every effort to attain to it can but serve to bring our impotence home to us.

If our faith in Revelation be sorely tried by what we know of the controversies of the day; if our ideals have perhaps become blurred, as we have watched the best that we saw, and have read, but too plainly for our happiness, the imperfections of the holiest of our acquaintances; if we have tried, and tried again, and still failed, because we did not rely as we ought upon a Strength which lay beyond our own; then let us renew our endeavours, in the old, unquestioning belief that there is One Who can crown them with triumph; let us embark once again on the old struggle, drawing near the Unseen, Divine Friend with the cry of doubting Thomas on our lips:—"My Lord and my God." None ever appealed thus and was unhelped.

AFTER THE MISSION.

"And they went out, and passed on through one street and forthwith the angel departed from him."—*Acts* xii. 10.

One moment the angel was at his side; his very bodily eyes were illuminated with the light which had been shed within the prison from the person of the supernatural visitant; his mind was in that highly-wrought state which comes when mortal man upon the earth is in direct communication with the other world.

Another moment, and all this was at an end. He was alone in the dim street of the Eastern City; a struggling moonbeam half lighting the squalid houses which abound in the neighbourhood of prisons. The highly-wrought sense of the supernatural would be succeeded by the inevitable reaction which comes with the return to common things. Even the prison might seem preferable to this; for the prison meant the prospect of speedy death, and death meant going to his loved Master: whereas now the prospect before him was years of common-place work.

Just allow me to make my meaning a little clearer to you by recalling the beginning of the

Bombay Cathedral, January 24th, 1892.

a story which I have taken up at its culminating moment.

The first season of actual persecution had fallen on the Christian community. One of the specially prominent Apostles, St. James, the brother of St. John, had been arrested and put to death by the sword. And now another, St. Peter himself, was in prison awaiting a like fate. As he lay bound between the soldiers who guarded him, he was awakened by a light in his cell, and aroused to find an angel beside him. The soldiers were asleep, and did not wake, and their prisoner was bidden follow the angel. The doors opened before them automatically, and the Apostle, half dazed, but half awake, passed out with his supernatural escort beyond the precincts of the prison. He was conveyed, as I read out to you, "through one street," and then in an instant of time he found himself alone and broad-awake in the dark or half-lighted street:—at liberty in body, indeed, but bereft of the exalted consciousness of the supernatural which had been his but a moment before;—alone and with a life-time before him, in which to suffer over again that anticipation of violent death which his Master had left him to

contemplate as certainly lying before him;—a life-time in which to labour for that Master amidst much of disappointment and anxiety; instead of a few days of expectation, to end with the dismissal to his Lord which St. James had already received.

And yet it was deliverance that had come to him, deliverance from imprisonment and uselessness, into liberty and work for the Master. And so his first thought was simply this—that the departure of the supernatural companion meant the proof of the reality of what had happened to him:—"Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent His angel, and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews."

Things were commonplace now, but they were real: before, there had been more of exaltation, but he could not bring himself to believe in the full reality of that which had been granted him by God. Reality, then, with commonness, be his; let highly wrought emotion depart; he was content to be at liberty and at work.

St. Peter's experience, my friends, has been many times repeated since his day. "Bring my

soul out of prison, that I may give thanks unto Thy Name," has been the prayer of many a soul lying "fast bound in misery and iron." And when God has heard, and answered the prayer, when He has let the oppressed go free, when it seems as though His Own absolving grace had opened the very doors of a prison, and let us go into the liberty of the Gospel, then there comes very often, I suppose, a short space of quite new exultation—the soul "like unto them that dream," when once its captivity is done away; the "mouth filled with laughter and the tongue with joy;" the supernatural brought so near and made so real that it seems as though "through one street" at any rate, God's angel was visibly present to it.

And then—why, then, in a moment, or perhaps by a steady ebbing of the full tide, it is left alone, the angel gone from it, no light such as shined in the prison when the moment of deliverance was at hand, no consciousness of supernatural escort to set us any farther on our way, but only the squalid surroundings of commonplace, every-day struggle; only liberty to fight and to work very much in the old way again.

I think that on the Sunday following a Mission,* there must be some among those who are listening to me who are either finding that this is the case with them, or are likely to find it very soon. For, unless I am strangely mistaken, there have been some among the hearers at this Mission to whom a gate of deliverance has been opened out of darkness and unhopefulness and captivity into a new sense of light and deliverance. Either the sense of Divine things, of God's Presence, has been aroused where it was dormant before; or the power which the Gospel ought to exercise has become something actual and effective where before it had been acknowledged as a theory instead of being operative as a fact; or God's forgiveness has been brought home as something personal, something actually applying to oneself, whereas before it had been known to be possible much more than accepted as personal; or the ability of His grace to make one strong, to enable one to hold out against temptation, has been translated from a mere hope for the future into a present, substantial

* A parochial Mission, conducted by the Rev. Fr. Black, M.A., had been concluded a week previously.

fact "Now we believe,"—we dare to say—"Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard Him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

Now, at times of special mercy like these, when God manifests Himself so intimately to the soul, when the things which we have striven to apprehend become all but intuitions for a time—at seasons of special mercy such as this, it is inevitable that we should hope to retain what God intends that we should but get a glimpse of.

St. Peter had had a previous experience which protected him at this moment of deliverance, from the reaction which must have been imminent. You will remember the Mount of Transfiguration, and how he wanted to build the three tabernacles, for Christ and for Moses and for Elias; how he thought that the heavenly visitants of the moment had come to attend permanently on his Master; how he hoped that the Master Himself would be permanently displayed to the world in that glory of manifested Godhead which had gleamed out for one moment through His Manhood. "It is good for us to be here,"

he had said, as though the Mountain of Transfiguration could have been made into a permanent abode: "Let us build here three tabernacles, one for Thee and one for Moses and one for Elias"—"Not knowing what he said," the evangelists are careful to add. And then the whole vision had passed away, and there was no man with them but Jesus only, and they had come down to the contentions and the want of faith of the scene at the foot of the mountain.

But now he had learned better than that. Now he took the departure of the angel as the proof, and the necessary proof, of the reality of all that had befallen him.

Now there is danger that at such times as I have been describing, we should behave as St. Peter behaved on the Mountain of Transfiguration, and not as he did on his release, when he remembered the lesson he had learnt at that earlier stage of his experience; that we should suppose that any special exaltation which accompanies the outpouring of grace is to remain with us as a permanent possession, instead of being vouchsafed for a passing help to be dispensed with at ordinary times. The danger is that

when it ceases to illuminate us, when the angel has left us, as it were, and we find ourselves alone in the squalid street, we should think that the whole has been a delusion: instead of taking the return to common day as the very proof that the deliverance vouchsafed to us has been real with the very deepest of reality.

And, again, there is a danger still more perilous—that we should dwell with such selfish indulgence on the mere luxury of the blessing extended to us, that as soon as it is diminished or withdrawn, we may cease to exert, or to care for, the new powers which we have been privileged to receive.

Let me press home one or two simple lessons which grow naturally out of what I have been saying.

The first is, that special seasons of grace carry with them heavy special responsibilities. To have realised Divine things with a new closeness is to have added to the reckoning that we must render, when we are asked in the Day of Account, how we stand in relation to the Gospel. That we have even heard the teaching of our Lord means that we must answer for every privilege of

His instruction. But that He should have brought it home to our hearts, that His Spirit should have enabled us to enter into it, that we should "have tasted of the Heavenly Gift and of the powers of the world to come"—this means that failure to use it is a wilful turning of our backs upon opportunities weighed and rejected. I am not diminishing the accountability of those who have heard and never realised: God alone can estimate in every case, what allowances are to be made for slow hearts, and for unimpressible, unimaginative understandings. But it is most important that those who have realised, who have heard the Divine Voice within their hearts, should remember that at any rate for them no allowances of that kind can be expected. We did hear, we did understand, we took in that it had to do with ourselves, that our eternity depended upon our present, that forgiveness and grace were held out to us. For us, then, failure to persevere means the deliberate acceptance, with open eyes, of all that such failure carries with it.

And indeed this is no arbitrary dispensation: it is but the inevitable consequence of the laws of our nature as we find it. Every motive habitually

not acted upon becomes weaker and less operative continually. A similar law of deterioration exists in all organized nature. The organ habitually not used tends, alike in the individual and the species, to become atrophied, almost to disappear. And so it is pre-eminently in our moral nature. We are capable of being aroused to a motive whose insistence has so far been unrealised; and very marvellous, if we will to take advantage of it, may the effect of such arousing become. You will find it so in the present instance, my friends, if you steadily and immediately put in practice whatever of new motive and new ardour has been granted to you as the fruit of this Mission. But while we are capable of being aroused in this way to a motive not realised before; once realised, acted upon, made our own, it is afterwards neglected at our peril. To become accustomed to look it in the face, and to refuse it the supremacy which belongs to it is to secure that its power to arouse us shall speedily ebb and disappear. Contempt follows hard upon disobedience, where the great springs of action are concerned. And to learn to treat a motive with contempt is to forfeit its blessed power altogether.

And this is especially the case where the motive has forced itself home to us in any emotional form. The very strength of the emotion which accompanied it is what causes that total callousness should ensue, if the emotion remain a mere emotion not translated into practical action. The luxury of feeling and the callousness of indifference lie terribly close to one another. To cry over the pathos of a novel and to neglect the real suffering that we might relieve are two closely allied forms of selfishness.

Might I suggest as something practical for all of us that the most inevitable and most praiseworthy forms of sympathy may pass away and leave us poorer than they found us, if we fail to see in them some practical call to live lives of greater sympathy for others. We have all of us had our sympathies deeply touched in the course of the last ten days.* And I would suggest that even feeling such as this ought to lead us to find an outlet for sympathy in the sphere of our immediate surroundings. The Family for whom our hearts have been wrung are removed, both by

* H. R. H. the Duke of Clarence and Avondale died on Thursday, 14th January 1892.

distance and by station, out of the range of that practical assistance which we render so freely in this country to all who are in trouble or distress within reach of any aid which we can give. I would suggest, then, that we be specially on our guard lest next time that we are called upon for action we should be less ready to respond to the call, because we have been spectators at a tragedy where nothing was possible to us but to look on. Earnest prayer for those who have suffered most will be a safeguard and a blessing to ourselves.

To return to the very point from which I started—the responsibility for putting feeling into practice has always to be discharged after a time without the help which comes to us at first from the active presence of the feeling itself.

Hard, plodding perseverance in duty, dogged combat against the inroads of evil—to these we have just to settle down as our necessary portion in this life. And the struggle has got to be maintained with the ordinary weapons of God's grace; by watchfulness and Sacraments and Prayer persevered with through dark and through light. To look for any other support, to depend

on any stimulants, as it were, is only to encourage ourselves in delusion. We ought not to be disappointed or discouraged when emotion begins to fade into common dulness; we ought not to wish to retain what was granted just to give us a fresh start.

The place of emotion in our religious life is like that of the light kindling in a furnace. Place the light to the blocks of solid coal, and they refuse to burst into a blaze; you must first create a temperature around them by setting fire to something which blazes quickly. But the function of the straw and the shavings, of the lighter combustible matter, comes quickly and inevitably to an end; it blazes up, and its work is accomplished when once the stubborn coal has begun to light. But if you watch the progress of your fire you will see that when the kindling is burnt out there comes seemingly a lull in the burning—no more blaze, no crackling, no cheeriness, but only a dull, sullen burning, going on half unseen among the coals. Never mind; the kindling has done its work, and now the slow progress is all the better. It is when a steady red-heat has been attained that your engines can first be set

in motion: then the fire can lick up in an instant all the fresh material that is piled on to it: then the heat can be turned into motion; your vessel or your train can be propelled.

Just such is the function of kindled feeling in the spiritual life of the human soul. It is useful as far, and just as far, as it leads to the steady red-heat that means motive asserting its great power The mere blaze and crackle-up of emotion is useless, worse than useless, indeed, if it begin and end with itself; if it do not issue at once, and with steady progress, in supplying that steadfast determination which is the fuel of endeavours for God. At first it must seem to us, perhaps, as though the burning out of the first fervour meant a pause, a real check in the process. Not so, if we keep ourselves determinedly to putting all that we have learnt into practice. Then the pause means the gathering up of strength; means that all is going forward too deeply for much show to be left upon the surface; means that what was mere impulse to begin with is developing into earnestness and enthusiasm.

For earnestness lies deep and shows little. It works by bringing the force of great principles

to bear on the *minutiæ* of practice. It is maintained by laborious fidelity toiling on unrewarded by lofty feeling.

Be that our endeavour for the future—not to feel, not to realise, not to thrill, but to do, to resist, to endure, "looking unto Jesus."

UNRECOGNISED OPPORTUNITIES.

"Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."—*St. Luke.* xix. 44.

The passing-bell of a nationality and of a dispensation rings out in the Gospel for to-day:—"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes:" "Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

Let me set the scene before you once more, familiar although it is to every one of us. It may bring home the words of counsel which are to follow.

The brow of the Mount of Olives is crowded; the pilgrims are on their way to the Holy City, a motley, travel-stained multitude, in sight, at last, of the object of their pilgrimage. And to them it is no ordinary pilgrimage, such as they made to the Passover year by year. They have One in the middle of their procession, on Whom unbounded expectation is resting. As they look across the valley which intervenes, to the City which crowns the height on the other side, they see in their excited imaginations the scene of a

great triumph close at hand. The City before their eyes at the moment is captive, held down by a foreign garrison. The very worship of the Temple which adorns it is carried on by sufferance of the conquerors: the priests who officiate at its altars are the nominees of the detested Roman Governor. But a few days, as they believe, are to redress all. They have with them, escorted onward by their plaudits, the Wonder-worker, Whose miraculous intervention is to restore the palmy days of Jerusalem. They are conscious of the desperate courage before which even the legions might go down. And with a Leader Who can walk the water and raise the dead, what may not one effort accomplish?—"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed be the Kingdom of our Father David, which cometh in the Name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest."

Such the words, and such the expectations which were surging in tumultuous utterance around the Messiah of Israel.

His Own words were what I read to you just now:—"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes."

Others see, or believe themselves to see, that fair City rescued from captivity, ennobled with freedom once more, by Him Who was to enter it that day. What does He see, as He looks at the same scene?

We might give more than one answer to that question, which should be true as far as it goes, yet fall short of the whole truth of the case.

We might dwell, first, on the events in the near future, which He foresaw but too clearly, as distinguished from the different picture before the minds of the people around Him. It would be true, as far as it went, to say that where others saw before them the revival of national life through the influence which He was to acquire, He foresaw the ghastly national suicide which was to be perpetrated there in a few days; when the mob now cheering around Him was not only to clamour for His blood, but to imprecate its guilt upon the nation; that where others saw the battlements before them crowned henceforward with insignia of victory, He saw them sinking down in blood and fire, before the engines of Titus, the avenger.

Or, again, we might penetrate a little deeper; might say that below the surface of the events which were so shortly to take place upon that scene, He saw down to the hidden causes which were at work to render the tragedy so inevitable; that where others saw the worship of the Temple, He saw the hypocrisy and unreality which were rendering it unacceptable to His Father; that where others saw national feeling, and deemed it capable of developing into new triumphs, He saw the deep moral corruptions which had rendered it incapable of such revival.

But this answer, while more adequate than the last, would, in its turn, come short of the full truth, and most especially of its application to ourselves. What He saw in Jerusalem at that moment is exactly what He sees every day, what He may be seeing in you and me at this moment;—how opportunities unrecognised or sinned away recoil in the most terrific form of vengeance, to which humanity can ever be exposed; how refusal to receive truth and to act upon it leads straight, and by inevitable consequence, to inability to see it when presented.

In a word—alike in what He saw at that moment, and in what He foresaw as closely imminent, He read one instance, the most terrible in history, of a principle as old as human nature, and as fresh as the daily fresh probation which that nature is constantly passing through—that opportunities, when they come to be reckoned with, present themselves in a different aspect from what they wore when they had only to be used. Or, again, to put the thought in another form,—that moral judgment, appreciation of opportunity, is more matter of the will than of the understanding; that understanding not guided by good-will becomes blind to its own proper function; that good not appreciated and not accepted will in the end not present itself as good.

To develop this simple principle along one or two different lines:—Think, first, of one mysterious fact, the most mysterious, perhaps, in our whole probation, the most difficult to reconcile with our abstract notions of what such a probation should be like—take the fact that our greatest opportunities, those which carry most with them when used, which avenge themselves most terribly when neglected, present themselves,

almost invariably, in a form in which their issues are veiled from us.

Take the first great, blessed opportunity which belonged to all of us alike, the unconscious innocence of our childhood. Did we realise that we were moulding ourselves for life, when as yet there were only two precepts which we were capable of understanding at all:—speak the truth, and do as you are bid? Our moral world was bounded by these. We were incapable of understanding good and evil. Did we realise that in these two obligations there was bound up, as there certainly was, the whole making of nobility of character?—how obedience was to be the foundation of self-control, and how truthfulness or untruthfulness *then* meant generosity or meanness in after life? And yet as we acted out, or neglected those obligations, so simple, so obvious, so easy to be overstepped or to be tampered with, we were weaving our own future day by day. Warp and woof, opportunity and its employment, were being incorporated, moment by moment, into the web which is our character today.

Indeed, a child who fully realised these issues were a most unchild-like and unlovable being. To use the opportunities, not to realise them, it was that which was required of each one of us. Unrealised, they are used or they are passed by. But I appeal to the experience of thoughtful men, to say whether, today, when they have to be reckoned with, they present themselves as they did then, when they had to be used.

That word is a bad word; you must not use it; that act is a wrong act; you must not do it—that was all, mere matter of obedience, and obedience to a precept which seemed arbitrary. Naked innocence stood gazing upon the tree, and the subtle voice went on whispering from among the branches, "ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." And more hung on the seeming arbitrary obedience than you and I were aware of at the moment. There have been those who would fain have won back into the garden of Paradisal innocence, and who have found in bitter experience, what it is to have the way barred against them, as surely as by "Cherubim and a flaming sword." Repentance, amendment,

perseverance—all these, thank God, there may yet be. But the restoration of lost innocence—never.

But, again, at what stage of our later lives dare we say that our daily use of our opportunities has been such as to maintain at the full the clear sightedness of an unclouded moral judgment? I know few characters which are without a blind side, a point where the moral vision is obscured, where the intuitions which guide them right as a whole, seem to fail, to a degree which were incredible had experience not prepared one to encounter it.

Self-love, or some half-yielding to sensuality, or a temper quite out of control, or an incapacity to see the rights of other people, or a want of conscience about doubtful transactions, something or other glozed over with a specious name, which all around us can pick out as a glaring sin—why is it that things such as these reappear and reappear *ad infinitum*, to mar what ought to be fine characters, to scandalize some who should be helped, to cause good to be evil-spoken of all around us? I appeal fearlessly to the experience of every one, whether these things be

not facts undeniable in the life-stories, at which we are lookers on.

And if we know them to be facts in other lives, then I ask, with a like fearless appeal, how is it, my friend, with your own life? What, I ask, is the glozing half-lie, with which you hide your fault from yourself? What does Christ's eye see below the surface, where you see all showing fair? How, and where, have you too to be told that you "know not the time of your visitation?" that the years are passing over your head, and some portion of the work of your life, being left unrealised or unattempted? There have been moments, I think, of illumination, when you have seen it, as it were, by a lightning flash. You know enough to be terribly responsible for not knowing more than you do. And the reason why you do not know more is that you have not acted out what you do know. In your more careful preparations for Communion, it has come to you, it may have seemed for the moment, as though you could not lose sight of it again. Or if you have known one of those moments when penitence has laid itself bare at the feet of one of your fellow-sinners, set apart

to counsel and to absolve, it has seemed as though the insight of another heart had given you that clearer apprehension which up to that time you had wanted. How far have you been faithful to that vision? How far has the momentary illumination been prolonged into active endeavour? Or how far have you allowed the old mists to settle down and blur the prospect once more?

I am speaking now of the things which are permitted in lives which never wholly break down. But now and then we see a total break-down; see some life which appeared to be doing well, where all was respectability and good living, where on the whole, and with whatever patent weaknesses, we should have said that God and goodness reigned supreme. And then, either gradually or suddenly, sometimes by a slow course of sapping, breaking down the defences of the soul, sometimes by some volcanic upheaval of forces always latent within, there has ensued one of those moral catastrophes which startle us by their total unexpectedness.

What, I ask, is the secret of these catastrophes? "We carry within ourselves," says a great

writer—"we carry within ourselves the germs of our most exceptional actions." And the germ of such acts as I have in view, which contradict the apparent tenour of a whole life are to be found in some one hidden tendency, unchecked because never fully realised, unrealised because never fully faced. Grace unused, and sin unchecked in some one department of the life have brought down this utter ruin upon the whole.

Two practical lessons, and I have done.

The first is, distrust of ourselves and of our own estimate of our spiritual condition. Who can say, at any period of his life, that he has used his opportunities so faithfully that there is no fear about his spiritual clear-sightedness? The complacent self-estimates of good people are enough to make one shudder sometimes. I am not thinking of any one school; though it may be that the tendency is promoted by a particular set of beliefs. The disposition to be satisfied about oneself, and about one's spiritual condition before God, is embedded too deep in human nature to be eradicated by orthodoxy of any school. We may flatter ourselves upon the

thoroughness of our confessions just as grossly as upon the soundness of our conversion.

What I mean is, that whatever be our beliefs, and whatever our special religious practices, we should be on our guard against pampering our vanity with the belief that, however it be with others, we at any rate stand right before God. Who gave us the security from self-deception which we see so clearly to be wanting to other people? Who told us that we have so used our opportunities that Christ may not be weeping over us, with the same words with which He wept over Jerusalem:—"Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation"? The more humbly we preserve ourselves from self-confidence, the less we venture on ever flattering ourselves in anything, the better hope there assuredly is that we are keeping our judgment unclouded.

Think of yourself as very blind and very sinful; as having barely perception enough to be aware that you are not to be trusted, but are liable to be deceived about yourself. Keep all the clear-sightedness that you may have for estimating the two things most important to you, your past failures and your present opportunities.

Keep your vision unclouded about those, and leave everything else to your Lord. What you are in His sight at this moment, that you are, for good or for evil. No comfortable assurance will make you right, if He sees that something vital is wanting; and no diffidence, no distressing want of confidence, will do you one iota of harm, if He discerns that everything is well with you. But over-diffidence, like over-confidence, about oneself is to be deprecated as probably unhealthy. Be ever asking Him to take you as you are, and to make you all that He would have you to be. By far your best hope of being safe lies in leaving yourself thus quietly in His Hands. Tell Him all that you know against yourself, and ask Him, if you leave anything untold, to make that also clear to you in His Own way. And then avoid torturing yourself with doubts, as I have counselled you to avoid flattering yourself with over-confidence. The two things are really one and the same. Self-love may be too confident, or it may be too diffident, just according to our natural temperament. If we are fond of self-analysis and introspection, our self-love may even display itself alternately in

flattering, and in depreciating ourselves unduly. Humility, the love of Christ instead of self-will lead us to trust everything in His Hands. Just do this, and you can never be far wrong.

For, lastly, He Who wept over Jerusalem, and said, "If thou hadst known, even thou," was the same Jesus Who prayed for His murderers, and said, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." It may be true that our not knowing what we do is the result of our not doing what we know. It may be that we dare not say on our own account that we really did not know what we did at the moment when we committed our worst sins. Yet even so we may take comfort to ourselves from His having prayed that wondrous prayer on our behalf. We were blinded by passion or by self-love, and that blindness, we know too well, was our own fault. We may even be conscious sometimes that we kept disguising from ourselves, from our own conscience, the character of that which we were doing; that we kept alleging specious motives and excuses, which we knew to be false to the core. Or perhaps sometimes the worst feature of the

whole has just been that, with all our opportunities, we were so blind to the true character of what we did,—that we did manage to deceive ourselves so completely, to produce the blindness which at bottom we desired, to hide ourselves among the trees of the garden, till we almost thought that the Lord Himself would not see us.

While we leave ourselves, then, in His Hands, to be dealt with in the multitude of His mercies, let us be learning to pray for ourselves, that He will teach us to discern with growing clearness the true character of our actions in His sight; that He will modify all our false estimates, open our eyes to a true discernment of His dealings with us, make us know the times of His visitation, and avail ourselves of His so patient endurance of us.

Thus at least we may be saved from the worst of all, from that blindness to good when it appeals to us, which comes on those who wilfully shut their eyes. Thus at least shall we escape that last reproach:—"If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes."

God save us, one and all, from hearing that!

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.

"Verily verily I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not."—*St. John*, xxi. 18.

I suppose few people ever reach middle life, after a youth of any earnestness or high purpose, without finding that their point of view about many things seems to have altered—not wholly for the better. Or if they are not conscious themselves that the change is not wholly an improvement, very often the eye of a keen observer can detect that such is the case. On the whole, they may have ripened and mellowed, have got rid of a great deal of youthful crudeness, perhaps of a great deal of youthful hardness, and a great deal of youthful vanity and self-confidence; but the change is very seldom effected without some valuable portions of the cargo being thrown over along with the superfluities.

And so to an earnest man, as he looks backwards, it often seems that he would sacrifice

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half the gains which experience has undoubtedly brought with it, to recover a little of the enthusiasm which was once such a matter of course to him. We most of us have reason, in fact, to wish that we had attained in more perfection to the fulfilment of the poet's aspiration—

> "And I could wish my days to be.
> Bound each to each by natural piety."

As one who understands but too well what he desires to impress upon other people, I have chosen the words of my text as a vehicle for trying to bring it home to you. God grant that I may help some of the young so to rule and guide their own lives, as to have no reason, when they look back in later life, to regret that they have lost prematurely any earnest, honest enthusiasm. God grant that I may help some in later life to see how they may keep alive in themselves that sympathy with the aspirations of younger people which is our own best protection against cynicism.

Let me begin, then, by trying to bring before you Christ's words, and the circumstances which called them forth.

The fishing-boat had been drawn up upon the beach, the net emptied of its draught of great fishes; in the dim light of that morning in early summer, some forty days after the Passion. The disciples, after toiling all night, had been cheered by the Presence of their Master, once dead, now alive and revealed to them. All alike had been cheered by His Presence, and now one was singled out from the rest, to be chidden with a personal rebuke, and to be entrusted with a special commission.

Three times was he questioned by our Lord, to remind him of his threefold denial, and three times exhorted to special diligence in the work which was entrusted to his charge. Twice the question took this form, if we allow to the words their full meaning:—"Simon, son of John, dost thou love me with a supernatural love?" And both times, in the shameful thought of his denials, he had only ventured to say in reply, "Lord, thou knowest that I love Thee as a friend." The third time, the question was severer. The Lord takes his own word out of his mouth, and asks him the third time, "Simon, dost thou love me as a friend?" and Peter was grieved,—so again, runs

the full meaning of the words—"Peter was grieved, because this third time He said to him, Simon, dost thou love me as a friend?" and his grief bursts out in the passionate protest, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love thee as a friend." He could bear, in other words, to be doubted, where the doubt did not cut so very deep. He could acknowlege that he deserved to be questioned, whether the affection which broke down into denial had ever been a supernatural affection. But to be questioned about that which he had dared to claim, whether he loved his Master as a friend, this he thought was more than he could endure; and he appealed to the supernatural knowledge, which he knew that his Master possessed, to say whether he did not stand acquitted when tried on his affection as a friend. And yet, after such questioning of his affection, he had been entrusted with work for the Master:—"Feed my lambs, shepherd my sheep." Then there followed on the injunction to work the forewarning that he must die for that Master, to Whom he made this passionate appeal:—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young thou girdedst thyself and

walkedst whither thou wouldest. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not."

I find something ineffably touching about the way in which this treatment of St. Peter seems to embody what I wish to put before you as the lesson for all of us this evening. Half way between denials and martyrdom, with the great work of his life close before him, the Apostle is bidden to look back, to see what had been the cause of his falls. In the same breath he is bidden to look forward, and anticipate the crown of a martyr's death. And, as the link between retrospect and prospect, between the humbling recollection of the past and the glorious, terrible anticipation of the future, he is bidden work for both old and young on behalf of the Master of all.

"Lovest thou me, even as a friend?"—dare you say, having fallen so low, that you ever loved Jesus at all? "Feed my lambs, shepherd my sheep;—" do what work in the world lies before you to keep others more faithful than you have been. "When thou wast young thou

girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest. But when thou halt, be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not;"—let the thought of the self-confidence of youth, and its contrast with the helplessness of age, but add strength to your resolvedness in the present to do something for Christ and for your fellow men.

I wish to make a somewhat free use of these words of our Lord to St. Peter, and apply them to the problem which I have before me—how to live at each period of our life, so as to try and gain a unity for the whole, in earnest serving of our Master through sympathy and allowances for our fellows.

And first of all, if you are trying in early youth to serve God, and to live for lofty aims, there is one great, unrealised danger which besets you just because of your earnestness, and because of your short experience of life. You are in danger of passing harsh judgments upon those who are older than yourself. Youth sees the narrow way and the strait gate narrowed down to limitations yet more straitened than the demands

of the Master necessitate. It is ready with its off-hand distinctions between those who, in the light of its own standards, are walking upon the broad and the narrow ways—its own choice so well defined, as it believes, so sharply parted from the passengers to destruction

And the reason is that apart from experience it is impossible to know how to make allowances. Youth sees things, of necessity, in the abstract; they have never presented themselves in the concrete; that comes with the experience of years. And not only does it see things in the abstract, gaining many of its impressions from books, but in so far as it sees them in the concrete, they all shew through the highly coloured glasses which are furnished by its own aspirations.

Aspirations are the salt of youthful life, with their generous disregard for hindrances. Their disbelief in obstacles and infirmities. They are nothing to be laughed at or cried down: on the contrary they are to be encouraged to the utmost. But still, they are abstract, after all. They have not learnt the "Gospel of failure," the blessed humbling lessons which come from

imperfect performance contrasted with glowing intention. And so, as I said to begin with, youth's judgments are proverbially hard.

Here is something that Browning said about them, about the youth with his ready verdicts upon older people—

"Oh, he knows what defeat means, and the rest!
Himself the undefeated that shall be:
Failure, disgrace, he flings them you to test,—
His triumph, in eternity
Too plainly manifest!"

"When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest"—You saw the world all spacious before you: no obstacles, it appeared, were to stop you: no misgivings, at any rate, disturbed you: this and that was before you as your ideal: and to have formed a high ideal, you thought, meant of itself to have carried it out. Only the details, you thought, were still to settle. And so the whole was mapped out at a glance—mapped out for yourself and for other people—as plain, as free from complications as a problem pro-

pounded in mathematics. This and that are the right things to be done ; go and do them, or expect to be worse off;—so reasons the young legislator for all the world, with all the audacity of inexperience, and yet—acknowledge it, middle-age—with all its nobility too.

Yes, " When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest. But when thou shalt be old, another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." This, alas, is too often the later experience—"another," nay millions of others, " shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not, " shall tie you, hand and foot, with the hard bonds of a stiff conventionality ; shall cramp the youthful freedom of movement which seemed to range over so spacious a moral world ; shall limit you to trying, none too eagerly, to attain to a certain tame standard which shall not contrast too obstrusively with the unideal practice around you. Well for you, perhaps, if it do not lead you yet further out of the path which was once so well defined, so impossible to swerve from, as it appeared.

And how, too often, does this come about? Is it not by the sheer force of reaction, after the

abstract has begun to pass away, and real life to press more closely upon us?

It may begin, does sometimes begin, from the very need for revising our harsh judgments, for making more allowances for other people. We learn to see things with a less cruel definedness, in our estimate of the actions of others. We see ourselves surrounded by tried souls, hardly bestead in the entanglements of that way which once seemed so sharply defined; see the mire of conventionality which has overspread it, in which we are all wading ankle-deep; see paths, somewhat devious perhaps, which lie yet between the walls of the narrow way; and people wandering, sorely baffled, among them, who are yet clearly not facing towards destruction. And where once denunciation would have been our language, we learn that if we would win people to a closer walk, we must make it plain that we feel for them and believe in them.

And all this carries with it its own dangers. We were right to apply principles sharply, so long as our own conduct was in question. And it is hard, very hard to make allowances, to

judge sympathetically of other people, and yet never to descend, in the process, to rounding off the rough edges of principle where we find them pressing hardly upon ourselves. If the knowledge of difficulties is to make us gentle, why, whose difficulties, we are tempted to ask, do we understand so sympathetically as our own? If circumstances modify cases, then surely, at the bar of our conscience, there must be found innumerable modifications to excuse the deficiencies of our own practice. And so the fatal process goes on, and the conventionalities in which we saw people bemired come to clog our own feet very sadly, and the paths into which we turned to their assistance present themselves as the veritable narrow way. And the early outlook, with its keen, frosty clearness, gets flurred with the haze of the midday heat. And we begin to question our early ideals, to throw doubts over our own estimates of things, to question whether, after all, right and wrong be as clearly marked off as we had supposed; whether, perhaps, adaptibility to circumstances be not the real secret of healthy living.

The application, then?

Since life must mean change; since our point of view must be modified in spite of us, because we live through experience after experience; try to fix, as far as may be, that noblest attitude into which Christ can lead you, the one which He laid down for St. Peter, that of progress from impulsiveness in youth, through sympathy and service in middle life, to the cross as the close of the whole.

Let me quote again from the same poem of the same poet:—

> Nothing can be as it has been before;
> Better, so call it, only not the same.
> To draw one beauty into our heart's core,
> And keep it changeless! such our claim;
> So answered—never more.
>
> Simple? Why this is the old woe of the world,
> Tune, to whose rise and fall we live and die.
> Rise with it, then! Rejoice that man is hurled,
> From change to change unceasingly,
> His soul's wings never furled!

Are you young, all braced up for lofty effort, all aglow with the possibilities of noble service

which keep crowding into the field of your vision? Then beware of that harshness of judgment, against which I have been trying to warn you. Are you inclined to march straight on your own way, right over whatsoever may block it? Then remember there are problems in life, complications, entanglements, bewilderments, which you, with your lack of experience, are totally unable to understand. Before you assert your own right to brush aside older people who are enmeshed in them, remember that even you, with your clear-sightedness, may find that you had little notion, to begin with, how subtly they might come to clog your feet, how cruelly they might tame down your noble purposes.

Be content, then, in the heyday of youthful strength, to pay this tribute to your possible future, that however clearly you may see things yourself, you be yet ready to enter into people's weaknesses,—"considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Remember the weaknesses, the sensitiveness, over which you are inclined to go rough-shod. Should your own strength prove all that you expect of it, you will yet never repent having made allowances.

Indeed, they will be your surest protection against recoiling into pessimism hereafter, against first making surrender of yourself into the bondage of the world's lower standard, and then "preaching down" younger hearts with the pettiness of your own self-contempt.

For this, next, for application in later life:—let us beware of the terrible responsibility of checking enthusiasm in younger people. There are enough devil's-advocates in the world without your adding one to the number; how disappointed soever you may be with the results of your early self-confidence. Rather try to supplement what they lack by the sympathy which the young have not got, because they lack the experience by which to learn it. Rather refuse that surrender of yourself to be bound and haled about by conventionality: rather accept, if so be, some of that teaching which your juniors, with the didactiveness of their age, are so patronisingly ready to proffer you. If you cannot accept it as a whole, you will be none the worse for refreshing your jaded heart with a draught from the well-head of principle, from which they hand up such brimming chalices.

Ah, my friend, with your wise saws and modern instances, so pat for the suppression of enthusiasm, so potent for reducing to the world's standard the lofty notions which you deem tobe unpractical, it were well for you could you temper your ripe shrewdness with just a little of that unworldly enthusiasm which you show yourself in such haste to set down. They will learn but too soon the bitter lesson which you take as a matter of course:

> "Full soon *their* soul shall have her earthly freight,
> And custom lie upon *them* with a weight,
> Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!"

If years have taught you much about the world, I am sure this is as noble a lesson as any that you think they have brought with them:— that young hearts in the first flush of enthusiasm lie open to staggering blows from the cynicism of older men; that you had almost better murder the young life than rob of it God's best gift of noble purpose.

Rather hearken to the words of Jesus Christ as he reminds you that it is your own sad denials that are making you sceptical about goodness.

"Lovest thou Me!" He keeps asking you, when you shew yourself so overwise against effusiveness: bids you remember that life's best philosophy does not lie in understanding things more keenly, but in learning to love more and more.

You owned the Master, too, when you were younger. You saw that unselfishness and devotion were set before you as the means of serving Him. And why is it that now that you are older, you deny their possibility or their practicality? "Thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto"—so they taunted you when you got among the enemy; his speech does not smack of our accent; he speaks like a follower of the Nazarene. That was all: they scorned you for being unlike them. And still the words rankle in your heart: you have not courage to stand up for the Lord, and be unconventional as you once thought to be. You would not be warned in advance, and now you take to warning other people —that it is nonsense, indeed, that it is impossible to pretend to any standard but the world's.

Then hear the Master speak even to you: "Feed My lambs, shepherd My sheep." Take sympathy as your motto, not cynicism. Remem-

ber your own early aspirations. Let that which keeps ringing in your ears be the cock-crow which warned you of your fall, not the sneering words which brought it about. Remember its cause, your over-confidence. Warn younger men against that, not against the great principles that you failed to realize. Enter into their aspirations and their enthusiasms, and there shall come to you something of the strength which is wanted to brace you for the future.

The end may be the cross very likely; just because you strive once more to be faithful. But the strength to stretch your hands to it shall come to you. No youthful prowess any longer:—"thou shalt stretch forth thy hands and another shall gird thee." The cross shall be your portion, it is true. But if meantime you have fed the lambs and shepherded the sheep, the very contact shall have braced you for your trial.